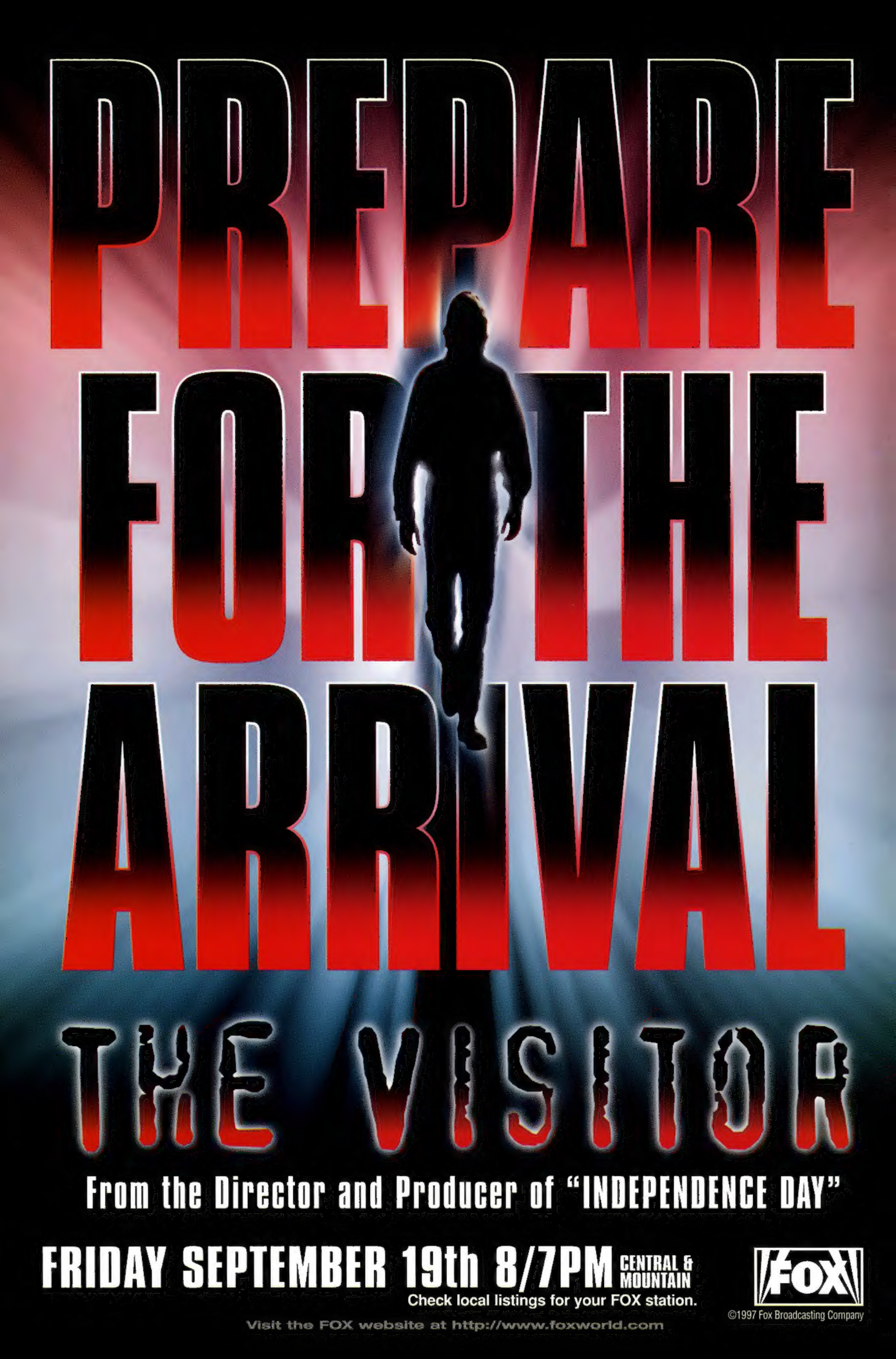
M•A•R•V•E•L
VISION
MARVEL COMICS
DEC
#24 $1.99
THE MA AN MAGAZINE
MOON KNIGHT
back from the DEAD!
HEROES RETURN!
TIMESLIP by glenn FABRY
beast FILES
SILLY moments
and MORE!
doug MOENCH
john Francis MOORE
adam POLLINA
j.m. DEMATTEIS
chris BACHALO
TOMMY lee EDWARDS
and the BOOKS they DO!
DIRECT EDITION
$1.99 U.S.
Edwards & edwards


PREPARE FOR THE ARRIVAL
THE VISITOR
From the Director and Producer of "INDEPENDENCE DAY"
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 19th 8/7PM CENTRAL & MOUNTAIN
Check local listings for your FOX station.
Visit the FOX website at http://www.foxworld.com
FOX
©1997 Fox Broadcasting Company

Editor

Stan Lee Presents MARVEL VISION #24

December 1997

I wish I had the foresight to have signed up for frequent flier miles. The month of July was travel month. As the editor of Marvel VISION and the Star Trek books I had to cover so much territory I think I passed the U.S.S. Voyager on its way back from the Delta Quadrant. Guess I should've stopped and said hello.

This year's San Diego ComicCon was really special. I wound up getting promoted from "gofer"-booth boy (whew) to "important"-panel boy (yeah, right).

It was a lot of fun. There were panels on the X-Men, Spider-Man, and Marvel's editorial plan with Stan Lee as a guest speaker. There was a great 1 on 100 as John Romita Sr. went solo and answered a slew of questions from fans while I ran around with a microphone doing my best Rikki Lake impersonation. Of course, two of my favorite panels were the Star Trek panel, with special guests Aron (Nog) Eisenberg and Chase (Leeta) Masterson from the TV show "Deep Space Nine", and The First Annual Mark Gruenwald Marvel Games Event. I was joined by Marvel V.P. of Editorial Planning, the man called "Ski," and THUNDERBOLTS editor Tom Brevoort.

We had a great time putting the audience through some truly wacky games. They were the best of sports. To the kid out there whom we taped up, hope to see you next year. We'll have an all-new roll of tape with your name on it!

After the convention, a few editors and myself traveled up to Los Angeles and visited the Paramount Movie Studios. All I can say is: "Wow!" I actually got to sit on the bridge of the Voyager and walk through Deep Space Nine.

All in all it was a great trip, and I'm sure next year will be even bigger and better. Maybe I *will* sign up for those frequent flier miles.

I'm done,

Tim Tuohy

Julio Soto
Assistant Editor
Nick Dragotta
Editorial Assistant
Mark Bernardo, Bryan Cairns
Dean Davis, Barry Dutter, Matt Idelson
Jim Krueger, Benny Powell
Peter Sanderson & Polly Watson
Writers
Chris Carroll, James DeSimone
Brent Ferguson, Jeanne Geier
Rob LaQuinta, Mel Sanchez
& Jeff Suter
Designers
Vito Incorvaia
Inspiration
Bill Rosemann
Catalog Editor
Regina Massaro
Licensing Liaison
Susan Raso
Manufacturing Representative
Suzanne Paquin
Printer Liaison
John Stack
Still driving Miss Daisy
Bob Harras
Big Chief
Jim (Ski) Sokolowski
V.P. of Editorial Planning
Shirrel Rhoades
Publisher
Jennifer Scholl
Fashion consultant to Bob Harras

ME WITH ARON (NOG) EISENBERG AND CHASE (LEETA) MASTERSON FROM DEEP SPACE NINE

STAN LEE PRESENTS

marvel vision no. 24

DECEMBER • NINETEEN HUNDRED AND NINETY SEVEN

contents

COVER STORY

8) He's wild. He's different. He sports a mane of blue hair. He's none other than X-FORCE's penciling genius Adam Pollina. What makes him tick? Find out as X-FORCE reaches its 75th issue!

FEATURE ARTICLES

12) Conan is back and better than ever. See what's in store for everybody's favorite barbarian.

25) Chris Bachalo graduates from the Gen X kids to the big leagues. He is now the penciler of UNCANNY X-MEN!

30) Veteran writer extraordinaire Doug Moench talks about the new MOON KNIGHT limited series!

38) J.M. DeMatteis has done it all but continues to wow fans with his work on Spider-Man. What's in Spidey's future? Only Peter Parker and J.M. know!

44) Spider-Man vs. Venom! Thought you've seen it all? Nah! Check this out!

SPECIALS

16) Did you ever wonder who was the best captain in Starfleet? Well, in STAR TREK UNLIMITED #7, Q and Trelane ask that very same question. They pit Captains Picard and Kirk against each other in a very unique way. Find out how they do it.

22) Heroes Return coverage continues!

47) The legendary Ghost Rider art team of Javier Saltares and Mark Texiera returns!

DEPARTMENTS

3) Letters to Marvel VISION

18) The Daily Bugle

20) Andy Mangles' Reel Marvel

28) Time Slip: Ghost Rider by Glenn Fabry

34) Silliest Moments: Video Game Thing

36) Beast Files: Nightcrawler

41) Around the Office: Suzanne Gaffney Beason

51) Marvels Unsung Heroes: Letterer Janice Chiang

52) Marvel Chronicles: 1975 Part II

COMICS GUIDE

56) Upcoming Marvel titles for December

58) Marvel Licensed Products

63) Next Issue/Ship Shape

MARVEL VISION™ Vol. 1, No. 24 December 1997. (ISSN# 1093-0817) Published by MARVEL COMICS, Shirrel Rhoades, Executive VP Publishing, Stan Lee, Publisher. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published monthly. Copyright © 1997 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.99 per copy in the U.S. and $2.80 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: $35.88 U.S.; Canadian subscribers must add $10.00 for postage and GST. GST #R127032852; $30.00 Foreign. Any statements expressed or implied in MARVEL VISION are solely those of the columnists and do not represent the editorial position of the publisher or MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. MARVEL VISION and all Marvel character names (and the distinctive likenesses thereof) are trademarks of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. All non-Marvel artwork is Copyright © and trademark of the respective owners. Star Trek and its related marks are ™,® and Copyright © 1997 Paramount Pictures. All rights reserved. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO MARVEL VISION, c/o MARVEL DIRECT MARKETING INC./SUBSCRIPTION DEPT., P.O. BOX 1979, DANBURY, CT 06813-1979. TELEPHONE # (203) 743-5331. Printed in Canada.

MARVEL VISION insights

Dear Marvel VISION,

Since Marvel VISION seems to be the official mouthpiece for the company and the best forum in which to reach the Marvel Comics fans, I wanted to ask a question that everyone seems to have a different answer to—when did the Marvel Silver Age end?

I ask this question because I'm currently a graduate student studying twentieth century American cultural history and I would like to incorporate my knowledge of comics into my planned dissertation. During my research on the cultural significance of television and film on the American psyche, I have noticed that scholars have generally divided different eras of these mediums in correspondence to the beginning and ending of decades.

However, in the case of comic books, dividing eras in this manner proves to be a bit more problematic. I have been collecting comics for the better part of the last 20 years and during this period of time, I have come across a multitude of varying opinions in different books, articles, and publications over the question of just when did the Marvel Comics Silver Age end? Some have said that it ended with the end of the sixties, some have said it ended when the books themselves changed their measurements, some have said it ended when the second generation of Marvel creators took over the production of the books, and some have said it ended when Gwen Stacy died.

I noticed in Marvel Chronicles in issue #15 of Marvel VISION that the Marvel Silver Age was drawing to a close in 1970. This implies that the early seventies Marvel material to still be part of the Silver Age. Is this Marvel's official position on the matter? Does Marvel on fact have a specific year, storyline, or issue that they believe was the end point for the end of the Silver Age and the beginning of the Bronze Age?

I am very interested in hearing what the company's take on this matter is as well as hearing your own opinion, Tim, and those of the readers of this publication. Any information or opinions that you and the readers could provided me will be invaluable in my ongoing research. Thanks.

Steven Yamashita
98-1759 Halakea St.
Aiea, Hawaii 96701

As always when a question vexes Julio and myself beyond all belief we go to the one man we know will give us the correct answer. That man is none other than Marvel VISION's own contributing writer, the man who brings us Marvel Chronicles month in and month out: Peter Sanderson!

First off, Marvel does not have an official position on when the Silver Age ended. This is a question that is more properly a concern for comics scholars and fans than it is for comic companies.

Moreover, there is no definite answer to the question. It is clear when Marvel's Golden Age ended, because the company stopped publishing super hero stories. Likewise, it is clear that Marvel's Silver Age began with FANTASTIC FOUR #1. But Marvel has not stopped publishing super hero comics since then, so there is no clear dividing line. Silver Age greats were working alongside a new generation of artists and writers. I don't think the change in the size of original art pages altered drawing styles enough to mark the Silver Age's end, and the change in the cover price did not indicate any change in the books' content. While Kurt Busiek in MARVELS suggested that Gwen Stacy's death marked the end of an era, I suspect that Gerry Conway, who wrote the story, and others at Marvel at the time thought they were continuing in Stan Lee's tradition. SPIDER-MAN had long been marked by deaths, notably Uncle Ben's and Gwen's own father; Stan had already even killed off a series' leading lady, Lady Pamela Hawley, in SGT. FURY.

Personally, if I had to choose a point at which Marvel's Silver Age ended, I would choose 1972, when Stan Lee stopped writing comic books on a regular basis and turned the job of Editor-In-Chief to Roy Thomas. At that point the three major figures of Marvel's Silver Age—Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Steve Ditko—were no longer writing or drawing Marvel comics. But there is no definitive answer to this question. You could well argue that the Silver Age ended when Kirby left Marvel in 1970.

As for designating other ages after the Silver Age, I have tried and given up. Did, say, GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #1 mark the start of a new age? Or the first DAREDEVIL that Frank Miller wrote? Since Marvel has kept on publishing continuously, new trends and creators arise even as old ones continued. Any attempt to divide Marvel's history into ages after 1972 will be purely arbitrary. You might as well just divide it up according to decades, just as you note that people do with other mediums

Dear INSIGHTS,

Gambit has always been one of my favorite characters, and I was very excited to read that he would be starring in his own limited series. My anticipation grew even more when I heard that secrets from his past would be revealed. Gambit's checkered past is a large part of his appeal to me. It's interesting that he feels that hooking up with the X-Men will somehow atone for his past misdeeds.

I've always liked Gambit for his devil-may-care attitude and his hedonistic tendencies. He started off being very fun-loving and quite the ladies man, yet it was always hinted that he was hiding something deeper and darker. Since he came out of his coma, it's been nothing BUT darkness. The Age of Apocalypse Gambit wasn't even this dark. I understand he's going through a tough time since the failure of his predestined-to-fail relationship with Rogue. Now that he's found someone he cares about, are the carefree days of yore gone? SHEESH! Will the poor guy ever smile again?

While I've enjoyed the previous aspects of Gambit's character, from the hedonism to the mystery, I was deeply disturbed by the article I read in Marvel VISION #21. I refuse to let this once cool character be tarnished by the blight of Christianity. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't recall any previous mention of Gambit being even remotely Christian. He may have had battles in a church before, but I've never seen him pop on Cerebro and talk to God.

For the most part, religion hasn't gotten one third of the airtime that, oh, say, Norse mythology has had in Marvel Comics, which is as it should be. Your readers come from different backgrounds and have different personal beliefs. While adding a faith to a character will bring some of your readers closer to him, it will alienate many more. The safest way to play is not at all.

Yes, I've noticed a disturbing trend at Marvel. Whenever a super hero mentions a faith, it is almost always Christianity. More specifically, it is always Catholic. This has happened with the Punisher, Daredevil, Nightcrawler, and Sunspot. However, I don't recall Brother Voodoo ever mentioning Catholicism, even though voodoo is a mixture of Catholicism and indigenous Haitian religions. The only possible non-Christian faith examples are Sabra and Kitty Pryde, who are both ethnically Jewish but have never mentioned anything religious on panel.

At least in all of the above cases, religion has added dimension to the characters. We've learned the moral heights from which the Punisher has fallen since he was studying for the clergy. The addition of Christianity to both Daredevil and Nightcrawler's characters brings a sense of irony to their demonic countenances. But does the addition of Christianity do anything for Gambit that it hasn't done for numerous other Marvel heroes? I don't feel that it does. As a plot device it makes a handy backdrop for Gambit to judge good and evil against while alienating him from most of his fans. Good and evil can be defined without using any religion at all. It is love for your fellow humans that is good and lack of

respect for others that is evil. Religion has nothing to do with it.

I would rather find out that Gambit is: a) a woman, b) a woman trapped inside the body of a man, c) a clone, d) all of the above, than to ever see him go to church. I don't care how much the religious right is paying you, please keep Christianity to a minimum in your comics. If you want to pen religious super heroes, please refer to the Illuminator. Don't defile one of the few things I hold sacred: Marvel Comics.

Dennis Cooper
6537 N. Ashland Ave. #2
Chicago, IL 60626

Dennis, one of the trademarks of VISION is our continuing endeavor to print letters that might be referred to as controversial. Man, does yours fit the bill!

First off, we are disturbed by the phrase, "...blight of Christianity." Such a comment diminishes any possible valid argument you might have by presenting an already decided upon opinion.

Second, you're very correct in saying that you don't remember any previous mention of Gambit being Christian. However, was there ever any mention of him being not?

Third your comparison to Norse mythology and religion is not valid because, to those who believed in them, the Norse gods were worshipped and revered as in any other religion.

Finally, when a Marvel character mentions a faith, it is not always Christianity. You might perceive it that way due to your obvious negativity towards that particular religion. For example, Colossus is a admitted atheist, Wolverine believes in the Yin-Yang philosophy, and Storm believes in a Goddess who presides over all that is natural on Earth. Kitty has used her Jewish heritage in a battle with Dracula. Leonard Samson is also Jewish. And of course, Shang-Chi is anything but Christian. The list could go on.

We won't know what the addition to Christianity will bring to Gambit's character until we read the story.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude to Marvel Comics for the many fine books that you put out on a monthly basis. The first book I ever read was X-MEN #28. From that day on I was hooked on the Marvel Universe. I couldn't believe people who wrote in to say how a story had made them cry until I read the story of Illyana Rasputin's death. Since then my emotions have run the gamut from sorrow to joy.

I feel that besides being entertaining, your books have helped me mature as a person. You can name any topic from death, religion, war, suicide, to racial bias and those and many more can be found in the stories in my collection.

I'm sure that in the future you will continue to produce stories that both enlighten and entertain as well.

Michael Chatzis
179 McGarry Dr.
Kitchener, Ontario
Canada N2N 1A8

As always there's two sides to everything in the world and this just goes to prove it. Thanks, Michael.

Dear INSIGHTS,

Marvel VISION is awesome!!! It is very well organized and a whole lot of fun to read. Maybe the reason I like it so much is because I love Marvel Comics. They are the only things I read. Every Wednesday I go to the comic book store and spend $15.00 on Marvel Comics and I read Marvel books starring my favorite heroes. Plain and simple, I love Marvel Comics.

Now, I have a couple of questions. Maybe just one big one.

I love to draw, and after high school I plan on going to an art school. What classes should I take if I want to get in the comic biz? How do I get in the comic book business? Can I submit stuff now? Where do I send it?

Leonard Wojt
3938 N. Drake
Chicago, IL 60618

All those associated with VISION thank you for your vote of confidence. Together with them I hope to always keep VISION fresh and exciting.

You should go to art school. That is a must unless your great-great-great-great grandfather was DaVinci. Which art school you go to is purely up to the requirements that you're looking to fulfill. If at some point you decide to get into computer animation then a school that specialized in that field would be your best option. Our advice is to seriously consider all of your options in deciding on a school when furthering any education you pursue.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I have written this letter to address two subjects. Because both issues involve the whole Marvel Universe, I wrote to VISION instead of any one comic book.

First of all, your decision to include The New Guide to the Marvel Universe in most of the inside covers of each book was an excellent idea. I am more than happy to pay a few extra cents for the guide that refreshes the readers' memory about previous events pertaining to the story, especially because I buy a wide variety of your comics every month so I can get every single issue of every single book. And it definitely makes the comics a lot more reader friendly.

Secondly, I am beginning to become annoyed at the rate dead characters are returning. Norman Osborn, Marrow, Sebastian Shaw...even Sabertooth died in his super special. Now I hear Doc Ock is returning. It's getting pretty ridiculous in my mind. Now, don't get me wrong, if you can kill a character and bring him/her back to life with a good explanation and it makes sense, I have no problem. But when you bring the original Green Goblin back from his grave to attempt to explain and end the Clone Saga, well, let's just say I found better ways to end it in 101 WAYS TO END THE CLONE SAGA. The death of the Green Goblin has become a legend in many people's eyes, and it has now just been turned into a lie. If you are going to want a certain character in comics in the future, I suggest not killing him/her.

I'm sorry for being so blunt. I actually think Marvel is the best by far. I just thought I'd give you my 32 cents. Thanks.

Matt Warner
532 Cedar St.
Maxwell AFB, AL 36113

You're welcome, Matt. Again, when Marvel decides to do anything, the decision goes through many steps before you see the final product. The gatefold guides are an example of that as is the decision to bring back Norman Osborn. The thought of his utter hatred for Peter and the machinations that he has engineered make him an even more frightening villain than before.

And quite frankly, we don't know that we'll be bringing characters back when they're killed in a book. The original Goblin was "killed" more than twenty years ago and more than a few writers have been on the book since then. But look at it this way: the original Captain Marvel is still dead.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I would like to start off by saying that Marvel VISION is the best comic authority for me. Period! I can find out upcoming stories concerning my favorite titles from the Comics Guide section and enjoy interesting interviews of Marvel's best creators. Plus, departments like Beast Files, Origin of the Species, Greatest Comics Never Seen, and Marvel Chronicles are my favorite sections. This magazine has evolved into an informative, fun, and revealing source and hopefully will keep getting better and better. Now for some questions and comments about VISION and Marvel Comics:

1) First off, have you already done a Hulk Beast Files? If not, is there any way you can do one?

2) I think Andy Mangels's Reel Marvel should be a regular department. Since Marvel has many movie projects in the works, like Fantastic Four, Incredible Hulk, X-Men, Captain America, Silver Surfer, and Iron Man, it would be great if fans couldn rely on VISION to give details, casting information, and release dates so that we don't have to turn to other sources. Plus, several of Marvel's properties are also on TV.

3) Marvel editors are doing a great job selecting the best creators to work on the books. Tim Tuohy is certainly one of these editors. Another one is Bobbie Chase, who has managed to have the ultra-hot trio of Peter David, Adam Kubert, and Mark Farmer on INCREDIBLE HULK. She even got Lovern Kindzierski and Digital Chameleon to color Kubert and Farmer's incredible art, giving it a vivid and lush life. Peter David needs no praise. He is the best one there is. What he has done in the last ten years with the Hulk is legendary and inspiring to say the least. Tell Bobbie and Peter I said so. As for Kubert and Farmer, I think the Hulk never had it so good.

Finally, I would like to close up by saying, Tim, keep up the great work. You are doing an amazing job with Marvel VISION and I hope you guys keep getting better because I anxiously wait every month for your magazine.

Again, good luck with Marvel VISION. I hope to see you guys around for a long time.

Ibad Khan
4635 Woodbridge Drive
Powder Springs, GA 30073

Bobbie? Are you blushing? I'm blushing. On behalf of Ms. Chase, thank you for the compliment. We couldn't earn your praise if we didn't work with the best people in the business so don't forget them. Even that Adam Kubert guy is okay when his brother Andy tells him what to draw.

Andy's column might one day become regular but Julio and I are keeping him quite busy on our other book, STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE. He and his writing partner, Mike Martin, are turning in some awesome stories. Look for them.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I've been collecting comics for a few years now, and I'd like to put my two cents in on what's going on. I collect quite a few Marvel books and overall, I'm impressed.

I have little to say of the various X-Books. They haven't really caught my eye lately. Maybe Zero Tolerance will change this. Cable is an excellent character, but got watered down. I miss the more extreme Cable of years ago. X-Factor is one thing that has caught my eye though; I like the new angle. X-Force is another book whose older version I favored. From what I've seen, Maverick looks good. I'll probably wind up liking that since he's not too tied into the X-Teams.

Spider-Man is my personal favorite and I'm pleased Ben Reilly's out of the picture. When it was first revealed Peter was a clone, I was disgusted. I eventually warmed up to Reilly. There were truly excellent stories during his tenure as Spidey. Unlike a lot of people, I'm for his death. You can't have two Parkers around. A lot of people complained about the dark tone of the books and it really was too drawn out. But people don't get over tragedy that quickly, especially if they just found out they were clones. Characters progress as people do. The books themselves are great. I'm ecstatic MARVEL TEAM-UP is back, but at the same time a little saddened with UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN's cancellation. It was a great read and earned Marvel praise, which to be honest, is something you rarely see. John Romita Jr.'s work is great. I didn't like his art when I was a child, but as I've grown older I really appreciate his dark, moody, and often dramatic style. It made SPIDER-MAN #75 the best book I've ever read.

As for the Heroes category, I'm impressed. Heroes Reborn is interesting, but it's starting to get tired. I'd like to see things back to normal.

GHOST RIDER needs to return to his former glory. THUNDERBOLTS rocks. I love the concept, the art, everything about it. When you said they had a shocking event, you weren't kidding. KA-ZAR's another great new book. I was very skeptical at first, this being Ka-Zar. It has proved to be the most exciting book in my monthly pile. Before I read that first issue, I never would've thought I'd buy a Ka-Zar book every month. It just goes to show that there truly are very few secondary characters; it's all in the treatment. HEROES FOR HIRE is another good example of that.

Greg Caracci
416 NE 12th Ave.
Ocala, FL 34470

Look for exciting things to be happening over in the land of the X-Men. There're new writers and new artists showing up as this is written. This issue has an interview with one of those new members of the family, soon-to-be-arriving UNCANNY penciler Chris Bachalo.

Spider-Man is on track now thanks to the editorial hand of Ralph Macchio. And as you may have noticed, this letter column is frequently known as the Thunderbolts/Ka-Zar appreciation pages. Those books rock!

Dear INSIGHTS,

I haven't bought very many Marvel comics lately. I felt that most of what Marvel had been publishing in the past 15 years or so was idiotic junk, with UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN being one of the few exceptions. I thought that good storytelling was dead at Marvel.

Now I'm optimistic about Marvel's future. I now feel that good story telling isn't dead. It's only in suspended animation. It hasn't revived completely but it will if you hire more writers like Mark Waid, Kurt Busiek, and Roger Stern.

I can't wait for new projects like ALPHA FLIGHT and HEROES FOR HIRE. I have one suggestion for the latter, though. Why don't you renew the war between Cage and one of his oldest and deadliest foes, the Soda Machine?

I think I've found a mistake worthy of a No-Prize. In your article on the Thunderbolts, you mentioned that the Hulk recognized the voice of Songbird, AKA Moonstone. However, Songbird was really Screaming Mimi. Moonstone took the identity of Meteorite.

Adrian McClure
2870 Ashland St.
W. Lafayette, IN 47906

Thanks for your letter, Adrian. We Marvel editors believe as you do that solid storytelling is only waiting to return and that our job is to get it back just a little faster.

Nice try at the No-Prize, but to be truly eligible you must include an explanation of why the error or supposed error saw print.

Dear INSIGHTS,

First off, go back and look at the graphic design for VISION #20 letters page. It looks like a bad printing, what with the words INSIGHTS printed out of focus. It doesn't exactly make this easy to read. Let's do away with artsy poop with small font printing.

Next, the Clone Saga and Heroes Reborn weren't a plus. Sure, seeing Image house art in the pages of Marvel was easy on the eye, but it held up continuity already established in the regular titles. And, I was very sorry to hear DeFalco and Ryan wouldn't be coming back to the FF. I was very fond of that team.

Why VISION when Marvel now has Diamond to print the info on upcoming projects? Why should I buy 2 mags to get the info I used to get in one? Who really gives a hoot about Time Slip, Marvel Memories, and Around the Office? Not I. I just want to know what's new so I can reserve my copies. You've lost your other distribution deal, so get with the program and do your business with Diamond like everybody else.

While I was a fan of UNTOLD TALES, I figured you guys were going to run into continuity problems if you continued said title. I'd rather see SPIDER-MAN CLASSICS come back. It was a blast to re-purchase AMAZING in its correct order.

Last and least, Flashback was fun...but let's just get down to business doing what you guys usually do...make history with new comics about what's happening now!

Ed Coker
4909 Branch Lane
Jacksonville, FL 32207

Can't please 'em all!

Turn the page for the list of letter writers and a look at some fun we had at the office recently!

FUN AT MARVEL

If you're a regular visitor to the Mighty Marvel Bullpen pages, then you no doubt read of some wacky hijinks that recently took place. It seems an intrepid band of Marvel's finest decided to wrap editor Ralph Macchio up in some packing tape. Well, keeping in Marvel VISION's tradition of showing "Ralf" in the most embarrasing ways, (remember the article on interns when he was no more than a cardboard cutout), we present a look at the silliness that abounds at Marvel.

Still the House of Ideas! (And good fun as well!)

All Photos by: Jennifer Scholl

All wrapped up and nowhere to go. Yeah, right!

Ralf: "Help! 911! Anybody! Hellloo! Oh well, going down!"

Yes, folks it's another job well done.
Dan: "Do you think we should go get Ralf now?
Matt: "Ralf who?"

The perps: Dan Hosek, Matt Idelson, Paul Tutrone and Joe Andreani

Matt brings Ralf to the area of no return, Marvel's back elevators also known as the Negative Zone!

Matt gets the drop on Ralf while he's on the phone

Fear not, loyal Marvel Zombies. Ralf was eventually returned to his office to torture his assistant Matt Hicks some more. The Spider-Man office is once more whole. One strange thing, though: there's no more tape in Ralf's office. Wonder why?

Write in to: Marvel VISION Insights c/o Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue South
New York NY 10016.
Or E-Mail to: TIMM2E@ aol.com
Addresses will be withheld at the writer's request.

Thanks for writing and e-mailing!

Ardha Renzuli
Indonesia

Aaron Campbell
913 Buchanan NW
Corvallis, OR 97330

Harold Spoor
517 Fairground
Mexico, MO 65265

Noberto Gomez Jr.
607 S. Adams
Alice, TX 78332

Roy Kwarten
Heerlen
The Netherlands

Chris Akin
1514 Jamerson Landing
Marietta, GA 30066

Clare Smith
3 Valley Rd.
Pemberton, Wigan
Greater Manchester, England

Aidil Rizali
Indonesia

Stephan Brenner
Brasil

Nick Keppler
210 Woodview Dr.
Beaver, PA 15009

Allen Napier
HC69 Box 400
Arjay, KY 40902

Kevin Morsow
1862 Wodena Dr.
East Cleveland, OH 44112

GET FOUR FREE ISSUES OF THE SPIDER-MAN CYBERCOMIC
FREE IN KA-ZAR #8 and MARVEL VISION #25!
HERE'S A BUG YOU'RE GOING TO WANT IN YOUR COMPUTER!
Actually, I'm an Arachnid, not a bug.
Stan Lee presents...
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN IN HIS FIRST SPECTACULAR CD-ROM CYBERCOMIC!!!
Heed ye now these words, O fearless one! Check out the latest issue of Marvel's first ever Cybercomic! Starring none other than everyone's favorite wall-crawling, web-slinging, wise-cracking wonder. And I don't mean Irving Forbush! I'm talking about your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man! And here's the best part – because it's totally interactive, you won't just read the story, you'll live it!
So, take your vitamins, spunky-you're gonna be right in the action!
MAKE MINE MARVEL ONLINE!
NOW, TO FIND OUT WHAT MY SPIDEY-SENSE WAS BUZZING ABOUT.
1
2
3
4
MARVEL ONLINE
AMERICA Online
www.marvel.com
AOL at keyword: marvel
For a free AOL Starter Kit, call 1-800-592-6556. Try AOL for 50 free hours!
TM & © 1997 Marvel Characters, inc. All rights reserved.
America Online is a registered service mark of America Online.

X-TREME MEASURES:

Young, Hip, and Hittin' the Road

The truth is most of us don't spend our days swathed in colorful spandex fighting alongside our closest friends with the fate of the entire universe hanging in the balance. Most of us have probably never even been around the world, never mind outside of the Milky Way. Instead, we're more likely to be found hanging around clubs and coffee shops contemplating our future endeavors, potential romances, and less than pleasant financial situations. After all, the majority of us haven't quite figured out what we really want or where we belong.

The bad news is, that's life.

The good news is we are not alone.

The members of X-Force are going through the same thing, only in a more groovy, mutant kick-butt sort of way. The bad boy of the X-teams took off in a new direction with issue #70 in which the kids severed ties with Cable, their adult guardian. They just couldn't lie low as Nathan wanted and decided to strike out on their own, a bold and rather impulsive move even by super heroes' standards.

But according to writer John Francis Moore (X-MEN 2099, FACTOR-X, WOLVERINE: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST limited series), you ain't seen nuthin' yet.

"X-FORCE is a book about heroes coming into their own. They're at a point in their lives where they're not kids anymore but they're not quite adults either. Right now they're trying to figure things out for themselves as anyone in his or her late teens and early twenties is doing."

As a result, gone are the midnight stealth attacks and secret missions of the past. "The members of X-FORCE have always taken their own initiative instead of waiting around for someone to tell them what they should be doing. I think that makes them more vulnerable than other heroes, more arrogant, and more enthusiastic about the world. What we're really looking to do now is tap into the youthful exuberance of these characters. Although they are soldiers who have battled to protect mutants and saved the universe many times over, the fact is that these guys and gals are young. If their lives were all about life threatening confrontations, this book could never explore the joy of just being young, having fun, experiencing romance and staying out all night hanging out in diners after a night of clubbing. Part of what we'll be doing with X-FORCE now will involve taking them across the country very slowly and not necessarily in the straightest of lines." All the while, Cable's former students will begin trying to carve out a life both with and apart from its super hero aspect.

It won't be easy. According to Moore, the storyline slated for the book before the big landmark 75th issue will keep the team on their toes as James Proudstar finally meets up with Michael Whitecloud (whom eagle-eyed fans will remember from the Flashback issue). He will lead X-Force to the person(s) responsible for the slaughter of Warpath's tribe, the tragedy that left James with no family or home a few years back.

Meanwhile, the group will also be facing a problem most of us are all too familiar with: lack of cashola. "They have no money," says Moore. "So you're not going to find the new X-Force training in a state of the art fortress. More than likely, they'll be looking to rent a warehouse in the cheap part of town. Starting with issue #72 they'll even hire themselves out as bodyguards for a morally questionable character in order to pay the bills."

But all work and no play leaves these cats extremely bummed so in X-FORCE #75 the team will groove on down to a party none of them are bound to forget. "What I want to do with issue #75 is a lighter story that takes place at an alternative culture festival," reports Moore. "This won't be so much of a major event issue as it will be a chance for readers to touch base with as many characters from the team's past as possible."

Names, man! We want names!

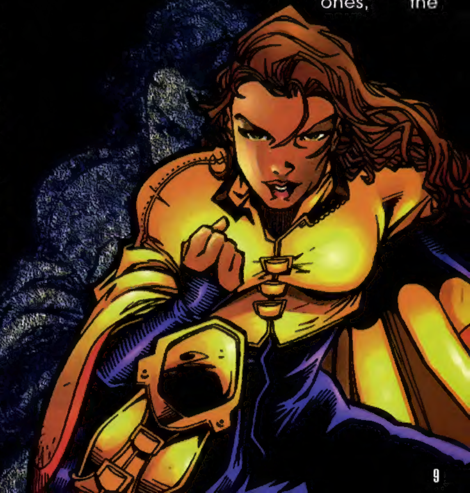
"Rictor, Cannonball, Wolfsbane, Karma, and Feral among others. This'll be a chance for the team to bond as friends and give fans a glance at what these characters lives might have been like if they had been 'normal' people."

So is this laid-back approach, like, some sort of trend? Yes and no. John Francis Moore wants to reassure readers that "although X-FORCE will become a more character oriented comic, it will not be devoid of action. Fans will still see some major Marvel villains appear in the book. But not all the stories will involve massive confrontations with super-powered threats."

Sounds solid but what about those backbones of the mutant universe, the X-Men? How much of an impact will old man Xavier's students have on the team? Well, according to editor Mark Powers, much like parents, old mentors just don't understand. "It used to be that X-Force fought with the X-Men and there was a generation gap in that sense, but there's a lot more to it now. A good way of explaining it would be to say that what the X-Men are to society, X-Force are to the X-Men. Siryn and the team realize the X-Men's intentions are noble, but to them, they're not going about things the right way. Therefore, the X-Men will no longer have much of a bearing on X-Force. The reason behind the changes that this title has been and will be going through is the fact that it just became too much of a homogenous X-title. Also, at times the focus shifted away from the characters and onto their costumes."

Surprisingly enough, moving away from flashy threads gives artist Adam Pollina (X-FORCE, GENERATION HEX) some cool fuel for inspiration. "What's really refreshing about this title is that it features a bunch of kids who don't know if they want to go to college or save the world. Artistically, that calls for making these characters look like kids. Although their basic appearance will stay the same, at present the physical change that is going to take place will be in their body language and clothing. I'm trying to put them in real clothes more often, clothes that fit each character. For example: Bobby was always a Don Juan type, so he'll be wearing clothes by Armani and other popular designers. Dani is an outdoorsy type, so she'll often be seen in cut-off Levis and a suede vest. There might even be a belly piercing or a tattoo added here or there; after all these characters are young and hip. They purposely won't be showing up for breakfast in costume, so that when we do suit them up, readers will be, like, 'Yeah cool!' My plan is to let the visuals of their everyday clothes say as much about the characters as the words coming out of their mouths."

This new approach to super heroing might sound crazy, but according to Pollina there is ample method to the madness. "When I was growing up my attention was divided between comics, Asteroids and "Star Wars." The visual competition wasn't anywhere near what it is today. Therefore, comics have to offer something different because just drawing a giant monster doesn't cut it anymore. Besides, there's no way I can think of drawing Sunspot or Warpath cool enough and with enough backstory so they would become more popular than Wolverine or Storm or Cyclops. Those characters are icons of the Marvel Universe. X-Force is going in an entirely different direction. These kids are the lost ones, the



ones without focus, the ones on a perpetual journey. By portraying that and pushing the envelope both in story and art, we hope to create a more realistic book while using the 'X' in X-FORCE to bring this almost underground aesthetic to the mainstream populace."

As a result, "all the best that X-Force has to offer is coming up in the next few months," according to Adam. "Starting with #71 things really begin to gather momentum. Everything that has happened prior to now has been leading up to this point."

So where does that leave super-couple Meltdown and Cannonball? What about Dani Moonstar, is she going to stick around for good? And what's up with Domino? According to super-scribe John Francis Moore, the fates of the X-Forcers read as follows:

Domino: "Domino's relationship with the members of X-Force is more as a big sister than a mother. She'll hook up with the team after #75 and be a recurring character for the most part. Currently, a device was implanted in Domino's nervous system that has basically neutralized her mutant powers. So she will spend the next little while regaining her confidence and her skills. Her hair will grow back eventually, so watch for a new do."

Sunspot: "Bobby is currently dealing with a lack of money because his trust fund has been frozen and all the money he thought would be there isn't. But he's a lot less angry than he was in the past and that will result in a more focused Sunspot. There will be a romance brewing for Bobby within the group, but it might not be for the best. Also, I'd like to deal with the Reignfire issue at some time in the future."

Dani Moonstar: "Dani is going to be the older and wiser one. There is a past history with her and some members of X-Force from when she was co-leader of the New Mutants. For that reason, they will be very quick to turn to her for decision-making, and that'll create some tension between her and Theresa. Dani is much more calm and together than Siryn. That's just her nature. Out of the group she's also the one really trying to reestablish who she is. Her time in the MLF (Mutant Liberation Front) was tough for her because she was living a lie and she's still trying to get over her time as a Valkyrie. Also, along with the psionic arrows, we're going to reintroduce some of the powers she had as Mirage."

Shatterstar: "Shatterstar has gone back to Mexico with Rictor to get Julio's family out of the black market business. For the time being, he has left the team."

Meltdown: "Tabitha will remain the wild one of the bunch. Her relationship with Cannonball will also be straightened out very soon."

Caliban: "Caliban has been imprisoned by Apocalypse. Unfortunately, once Apocalypse takes you into his midst, he doesn't just let you go."

Warpath: "The Warpath persona and name don't really fit James anymore. I'd like for James to rethink his identity and who he wants to be. That may result in a name change some time in the future."

Risque: "Risque is going to come back to the book, but not as a member of X-Force. She will show up from time to time to mess with James' head. She and Warpath have genuine feelings for each other, but because their relationship was built on a deception I don't think it will ever be too healthy."

Siryn: "Theresa will continue to lead X-Force. Her affection for James is still there but she knows it's too late for them. She wants to be more receptive to him but she doesn't know how. Also, her relationship with Deadpool will be explored."

As you can see, the members of X-Force don't know exactly what direction they're heading in either. Their destinies are probably taking a hundred dizzying U-turns even as you read these words.

So welcome to life in the '90s.

The good news is they are not alone.

—Rob Piotrowski

Built anything Cool lately?
1A
2A
3A
4A
Check these out!
DO it! Just for the FUN of it.
Get a Model Kit for a Penny!*
LIMITED TIME OFFER
*plus $2.99 shipping & handling
That's right! You can get one of these excellent Revell-Monogram kits for only one penny! Up to a $10 retail value! Just mail the order form below, or send us your name, age, address and the number of the kit you want, along with $2.99 for shipping and handling (that's $3.00 total), and prepare yourself for a wild ride.
MAIL TO: Kit Offer Dept.A Revell-Monogram
8601 Waukegan Road
Morton Grove, IL 60053
Send check or money order for $3.00 made out to Revell-Monogram. (No cash.)
Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. All orders shipped UPS Ground (No P.O. Box addresses, please.) Offer good in U.S. and Canada only. Quantities limited. Revell-Monogram reserves the right to substitute another kit from selection shown. Limit 1 per customer. Offer expires 3/31/98.
Name ____
Address ____
City ____ State ____ Zip ____
Phone ____
Age ____ Male ____ Female ____
Have you built model kits before?
yes ___ no ___
If so, how many? ____
Please circle the kit you want:
1A 2A 3A 4A
Today's date ____
SnapTite®Kits require no gluing or painting. (Ages 8 and up.) F-16 and Chevy Coupe require glue and paint, not included. (Ages 10 and up.)
Revell MONOGRAM
www.revell-monogram.com
ALL TRADEMARKS USED UNDER LICENSE.
© REVELL-MONOGRAM, INC. 1997

He who lives by the sword...

He never backs down from a fight, his physique would turn the gods green with envy, and now he's even getting a second limited series written by Chuck Dixon (CODE OF HONOR, DETECTIVE COMICS), penciled by Steven Lieber (GRENDEL TALES, HAWKMAN, BATMAN), and inked by Klaus Janson (DAREDEVIL, GAMBIT LIMITED SERIES, WHAT IF?). All in all, Conan is doing all right. For a barbarian.

Since the very beginning, fans have found this mammoth Cimmerian easy to relate to and intriguing to watch. His fantasy universe provided an alternative to the commonplace superpowered-hero-in-the-city-scene approach. His slice-'em-up and ask-questions-later attitude was nothing like comic readers had ever seen before. And his anti-mamma's-boy approach to life taught us all a little something about going for it (whatever, it, may have been at the time).

As a result, Conan has been many things to many people. In his original series, CONAN THE BARBARIAN, he was an over-the-top adventurer, in CONAN THE KING a distinguished ruler (as far as barbarians go), and in his own black and white magazine, THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN, a deadly marauder with a hint of humanity. From battling it out with angry gods, to overpowering malicious wizards, to tearing apart giant snakes with his bare hands, Conan was perhaps the granddaddy of all things extreme. And then some. Fortunately, some things never change. This time around the Cimmerian is set to follow up a recent red-hot limited series with the three issue CONAN: THE USURPER, an epic adventure sure to satisfy the barbarian-like hunger of longstanding fans as well as attract a whole new generation of readers. Giant snakes and spiders, beware!

Series editor Tim 'Dragon Slayer' Tuohy claims that Conan has a relatively straightforward reason for doing what he does. "Conan left his homeland to seek fortunes in lands elsewhere as a sword for hire many years ago. And that,s what he does today. His parents were typical Cimmerians who lived a good life but Conan just wanted a different lifestyle for himself. It was not rebelliousness on his part and he did not bear his parents any ill. Conan just had a calling. Now he's running around looking for a good time. He doesn,t always know how he's going to get it but part of the deal is that there aren't any responsibilities and day-to-day grinds involved. He doesn't even have a great affinity for Crom, the god of the barbarians. Conan is a very reality-grounded character. If he can't see you or touch you, he doubts you. He is a very physical individual and that lifestyle leads to very physical beliefs. Basically, he lives for the moment."

If you're thinking that's one whacked out premise for a modern-day hero, you,re not the only one. But it's just like your mother always said, never judge a barbarian by how well he stocks his quiver 'cause all it takes is one arrow to take out ver eye!

"Conan is a very fair man," explains Tuohy. "He doesn't prejudge anyone. The way he responds to someone that approaches him is but a reflection of how that man/woman acts towards him to begin with. If someone welcomes him with open arms, that's how he/she will be received. But, on the other hand, if a guy comes running at him swinging a mace, well, the rest is history. And as we all know, so is the guy.

"It's like the cover to that Van Halen album where a tornado ripped through a small town and one house is destroyed and the house right next door is left untouched. That's Conan. He can step on your house or walk by without doing a thing. The man is a force of nature. There's no controlling him and no anticipating his next move, he,s that primal."

Penciler Steve Lieber agrees. "Conan is a character with clear, understandable motivations. If he wants something, he takes it. If someone gets in his way, he steamrolls right over them. However, he does have a sense of right and wrong and sticks to it. That's what separates him from the rest of his world. There's an instant appeal there for anyone who has ever felt constrained by the trappings of civilization."

According to Tim 'Where'd I put that throwing star?' Tuohy, there are three major elements that must appear in any good Conan story: 1) Conan gets drunk, 2) Conan gets into a fight, and 3) Conan gets the girl. Not exactly the best example of intricate dramatic theory, but then again, that's the point. "The heart of this character is that he is a heck of a guy, the type of individual many of us dream of being in our wildest fantasies. In the past, many Conan stories were bogged down with subplots and it all became much too dense of a thread to follow. There will be a place for subplots in CONAN: THE USURPER, but they will not dominate the series. Instead, we'll be concentrating on nice clean storytelling which will allow readers to know exactly what is going on with the character at any given time."

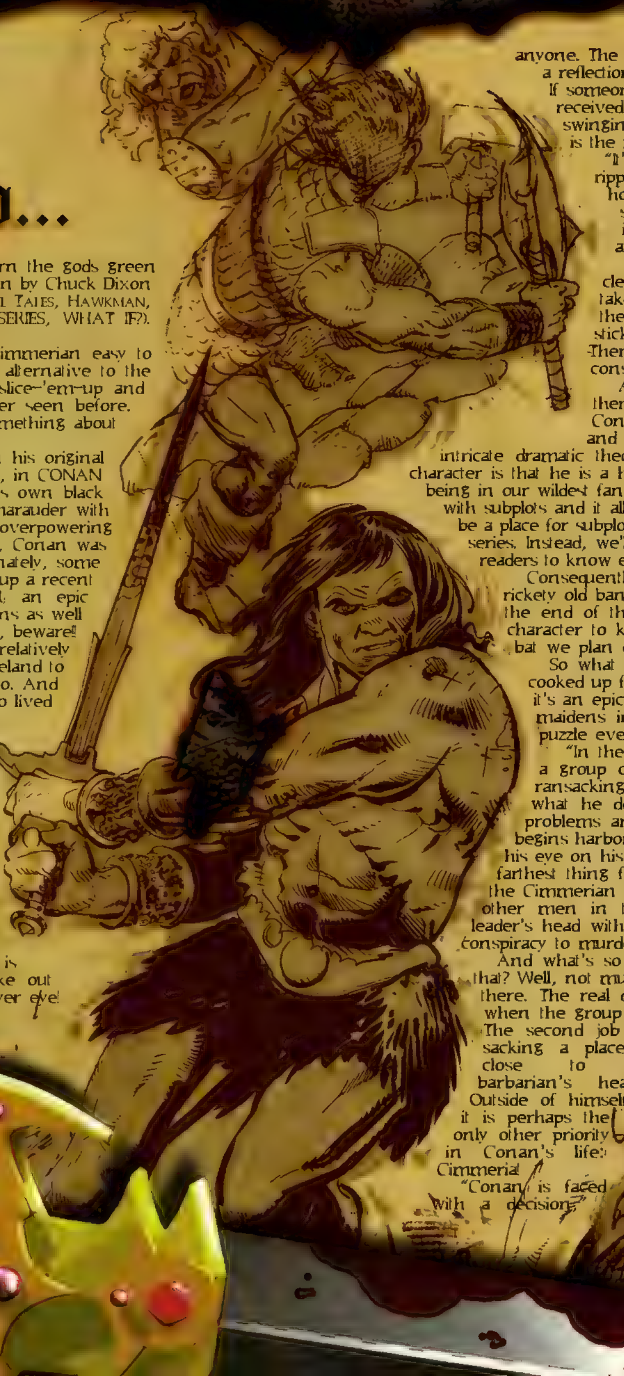
Consequently, even new fans will be able to jump right onto the rickety old bandwagon and take it for a spin around the town well. "By the end of the first issue, readers will be familiar enough with the character to know what he,s thinking," reports Tuohy. "Right off the bat we plan on getting Conan into the reader's head."

So what type of adventure has the village scribe, Chuck Dixon, cooked up for the first mouth-watering story arc? According to Tim, it's an epic tale that will consist of both high-flying sword arms and maidens in distress, with an intriguing moral twist that's sure to puzzle even the highest ranking wizard in your area.

"In the first issue, Conan is hired as a mercenary. He has joined a group of other swords for hire whose main mission consists of ransacking cities. The first job is straightforward enough. Conan does what he does best and gets the job done. The problems arise when the leader of the group begins harboring suspicions that Conan's got his eye on his position. Of course, this is the farthest thing from Conan's mind. But since the Cimmerian is such a great warrior, the other men in the group start filling the leader's head with ideas and before long, a conspiracy to murder Conan is entertained."

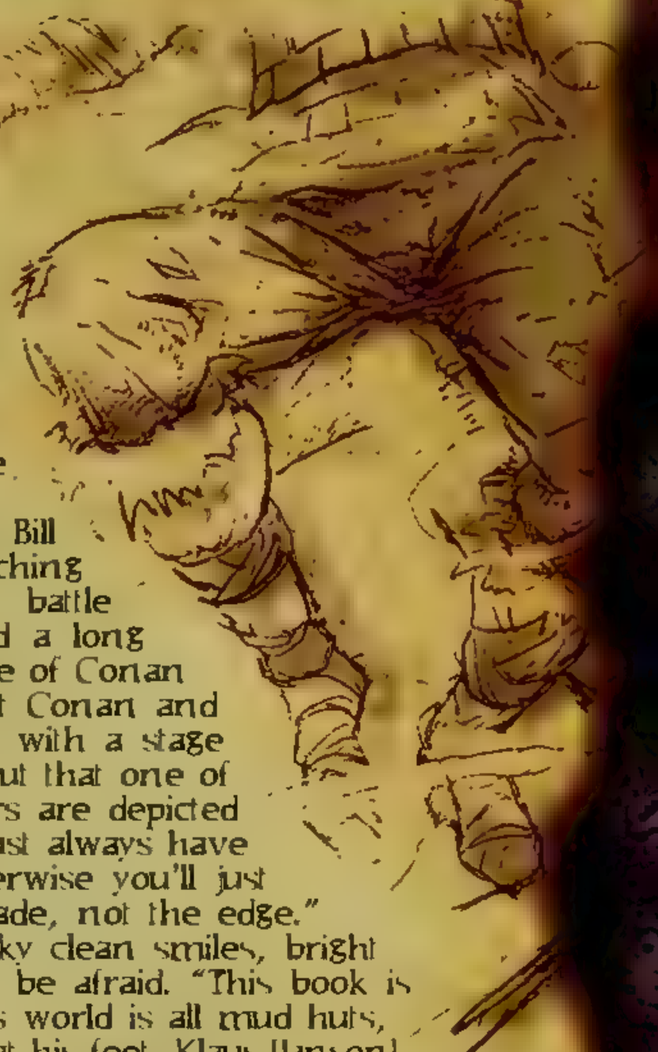
And what's so morally challenging about that? Well, not much really, but we're getting there. The real dilemma rears its ugly head when the group is given its next assignment. The second job involves sacking a place very close to the barbarian's heart. Outside of himself, it is perhaps the only other priority in Conan's life: Cimmeria!

"Conan is faced with a decision."



claims Tuohy. "Conan must choose whether his life as a barbarian comes before the life he remembers as a boy there." Clearly, there's a lot more than just pride at stake here. We're talking about a wad of guilt with a buoyancy factor so great you couldn't find a mug deep enough, an ale thick enough, nor a tavern big enough to drown it in. So what's the final verdict? Beats me, they never let me in on any of the good stuff.

However, Steve Lieber was kind enough to reveal the reason for his enthusiasm towards this project: "Even when I got out of comics for a while a few years back, one of the things I still read regularly was the Mark Silverstri and Geoff Isherwood illustrated CONAN THE KING. As a result, I can describe my enthusiasm for this project in three words: dream-come-true. I like drawing Conan's world, the buildings, the clothes, the weapons and armor, the horses. It's all a lot of fun to work with because I can really let my imagination roam. Conan himself is great; it's a blast to try to conjure up all that power and put it on the page. His character is so well established visually that we won't be making any drastic changes. If we did, it just wouldn't be Conan anymore.



"For inspiration, I've been looking at Ron Cobb and Bill Stout's designs for the original movie. I've been researching ancient warfare and studying the Roman and Vikings, battle techniques as well as things like siege warfare. I also had a long rewarding conversation with John Hocking who wrote a couple of Conan novels for TOR books. He shared some valuable insights about Conan and his world. On top of that, I even spent several hours talking with a stage sword fight choreographer asking all sorts of questions. Turns out that one of the most common mistakes in comics is that most characters are depicted holding a broadsword like a baseball bat. The rule is you must always have your second set of knuckles aligned with the blade, otherwise you'll just end up spanking your enemy with the flat end of the blade, not the edge."

As for the overall look of the book, if you fancy squeaky clean smiles, bright colors and tidy backdrops, be prepared, or better yet. . . be afraid. "This book is going to have a very gritty feel," explains Lieber. "Conan's world is all mud huts, unpaved roads, and dozens of unwashed barbarian corpses at his feet. Klaus Janson and I will do everything we can to bring this world to life for the readers."

According to Lieber, fans can look forward to seeing such things as "a huge tavern brawl with Conan swinging a bar stool like a club, a barbarian army laying siege to a Vanir fort, the capital city of the Aquilonian Empire," and much more.

But if you're looking for wizards and magic spells, don't hold your breath. Or if you do, don't hold it for too long 'cause you'll just get real dizzy and they still won't be showing. As far as Editor Tim 'What do I need a shield for?' Tuohy is concerned, "Conan's inherent mistrust of wizards and all things magical has already been addressed in previous series. It seems that in the past, every second story dealt with the problem of defeating magic with steel and there are just a lot of other conflicts to deal with in Conan's world."

Now hold the phone: no mystical foes, a muscle-bound hero, swinging broadswords, wine, grit, and an occasional bar brawl to boot? Sounds great but there must be more!

And, as a matter of fact, there is!

"There will be a very strong female character introduced in issue #1. She,s a warrior whom Conan spares from the city they overthrow because of her exceptional battle skills. Although she will essentially be working for him as his sword bearer, she will get the best of Conan from time to time and be a constant reminder to him of Red Sonja," a former acquaintance and sword swinger.

CONAN: THE USURPER ships in October. If you run into any trouble getting your hands on a copy, just tell ,em a six-foot-five, 300-pound barbarian with a bad temper sent you. And if that doesn,t work, bring in a note from your mother!

—Robert Piotrowski

WARNING: CONSUMPTION OF THIS TASTY BITE-SIZED COMBINATION SNACK MAY CAUSE SUPER HULK STRENGTH, ULTRA-HYPER SENSITIZED HEARING AND SPIDERLIKE BEHAVIOR.

Spider-Man, Hulk TM & © 1997 Marvel Characters, Inc ©Mars Incorporated 1997

POSSIBILITIES UNLIMITED AS TWO TREKS COLLIDE!

If your icy green blood boils at the thought of the cool and collected Captain Jean-Luc Picard face-to-face with a mini-skirted Communications Officer Uhura, or if your dreams are filled with visions of imagined steamy confrontations between Counselor Deanna Troi and avowed ladies man Captain James T. Kirk, then mark November on the calendar as the month your wildest dreams come true! STAR TREK: UNLIMITED #7 is scheduled to hit the stands that month with its usual clocklike regularity — but we guarantee you its timeliness and its whopping 48-page size are the only ordinary things about this particular issue! Usually a bimonthly forum for either an all new classic Trek or TNG story, the format changed with issue #6 —and this issue pushes the intergalactic envelope even farther as the two Treks collide! The Enterprise NCC-1701-E and the original NCC-1701 switch captains, with intriguing results!

The trouble begins, unsurprisingly, with Q and the Squire of Gothos, Trelane, who are playing chess and arguing heatedly over which captain is better. Q hotly defends the more reserved Picard, while Trelane puts his money on the lusty Captain Kirk. The two, who each possess near omnipotent powers, as well as the temperaments of children, bicker fiercely until deciding, in a moment of inspiration, to switch the captains — without the knowledge of their respective crews!

Dan Abnett, who writes STAR TREK UNLIMITED along with his pal Ian Edginton, explains. "Ian and I felt cheated when we saw Star Trek: Generations," only Kirk and Picard met. Here, we get to see how each captain would react to having to command the other ship's crew!" We also get to see them in each other's uniforms! Thus, Kirk, transported out just as he is preparing to face off against the Klingons, finds himself in the 24th century and aboard the Enterprise-E moments after she has launched on her maiden voyage... and moments before she encounters an old-style D-7 Klingon battle cruiser! At that instant, Picard suddenly appears in the captain's chair of the NCC-1701 clad in a gold captain's uniform, with a Klingon Vor'Cha cruiser looming large on the view screen!

"All four ships and their crews have been placed into a dimension where there is no point of reference," explains UNLIMITED editor Tim Tuohy. "So, while the old Klingon ship may seem to be no match for the Enterprise-E, due to the machinations of Trelane, things don't progress as you might expect them to." Ditto the NCC-1701: though she appears to be far outclassed by the deadly Vor'Cha cruiser, her temporary captain is aware of a certain weakness in the Klingon defense which could ultimately save the smaller ship.

How will their crews react to the sudden switch? "Q and Trelane have adjusted their memories so that they don't know that they've got the wrong captains," says Dan. "Naturally, there's a lot of potential for culture clash! For example, Kirk can't keep his hands off Deanna Troi!" Apparently, the women of the NCC-1701 have an easier time of it! Rather than chasing female crew members, Picard is "fascinated with the opportunity to interact first-hand with people he's only read about in history books," explains Tim. "He's particularly fascinated with the idea of meeting Mr. Spock, before their eventual on-screen pairing (in the TNG episode, Unification)."

"We've tried really hard to keep the whole thing in Trek continuity, which is why we've coordinated the switch with the launch of the newest incarnation of the Enterprise," says Dan. "And the fact that Picard has mind-melded with Spock (also referred to in Unification) is crucially important to the way in which he interacts with him aboard the NCC-1701." "This was how Spock learned the details of his father's death," says Tim. "It's always stuck in his craw that Picard was there for Sarek's death, and he (Spock) wasn't. The events of this issue will set up that incident."

Continuity isn't the only aspect of this book that's received such detailed attention. In an unprecedented (and perhaps hair-loss-inducing) move, Tim decided that having the book drawn by both of UNLIMITED's artists would help drive home the differences between the two crews and their ships. Ron Randall, who regularly draws the book's TNG stories, was responsible for drawing Picard and the crew of the NCC-1701, while Tom Morgan, the book's "classic" Trek artist, lent his hand to Kirk and the crew of the Enterprise-E. "It was a logistical nightmare," admits the harried editor. "Ron drew seventeen pages, Tom drew seventeen pages, and they both worked on the remaining six pages where the crews are intermingled. It seemed like there were pages going back and forth for weeks!"

Ron Randall agrees that trading pages did indeed present a challenge, but stressed that the experiment was also lots of fun. "We were able to do it through the miracle of modern technology," laughs Ron. "Considerable credit is due the fax machine!" Ron and Tom divided up the "integrated" pages, and then faxed each other their layouts. Ron penciled everything except the Kirk figures, roughing in a figure for placement, and Tom did the same with his pages, saving the Picard for Ron to draw. "While we have different styles, they're similar enough in approach that the whole idea really worked out well," says Ron. "Tim said people actually came into his office and told him he was crazy. Of course he is, but I still think that this logistically turned out to be the best way to go."

But hey, why stop there? Each artist is being inked by his regular inker (Art Nicholls over Ron Randall and Scott Hanna over Tom Morgan), and there are even two colorists (Kevin Somers and Kevin Tinsley) collaborating on the final project. Plus, STAR TREK UNLIMITED #7 will be easily identifiable on the stands by its gorgeous painted cover, contributed by the talented Vince Evans.

"There have been novels with crossovers like this," says Tim, "and then there was DC's Convergence. But I guarantee you, this take will be the best take. Because it's Marvel's take!"

Weather
Unseasonably cold,highs near 40. Tonight mostly cloudy, with a chance of a light snow, lows in the mid 30's.

DAILY BUGLE®

IN THIS ISSUE
Domino speaks about life on the road with those wild mutants of X-Force.
Page B1

October 10, 1997 | New York's Finest Daily Newspaper | Fifty Cents

HEROES RETURN BACK FROM THE DEAD!

Artist Rendering

Jim Gluohy BUGLE STAFF

It was a day many prayed for but few if any believed would ever happen. Some of our greatest heroes, seemingly killed in the Onslaught battle several months ago, returned from beyond the veil, ready to pick up the pieces of their lives and go back to making the world safe.

Following days of relentless rainfalls which strangely and biblically covered the entire globe, an explosion of light and sound erupted over Central Park, terrifying onlookers and raising the spectre that perhaps Onslaught had returned. When the dust cleared, it was not Onslaught, but those that fought against him standing in the sunlight, as the rain abruptly came to a close. Reed and Sue Richards, Johnny Storm, and Ben Grimm, the Fantastic Four, were back, and were immediately overrun with hugs and cheers from well-wishers. Dr. Richards, who stood as the spokesperson of the group, seemed surprised by the reaction. In fact, most of his comments indicated that the group had no idea that so much time had passed since their final battle with Onslaught, or that the world had believed them dead. Upon hearing the news, Dr. Richards pronounced that the team would require some time to sort out the situation, and that they would be making a formal statement to the world before long. As the Bugle went to press, no statement had yet been made. Before departing, however, Dr. Richards did infer that the teams had experienced some kind of otherworldly adventure during their time away, though he was reticent to provide further details. Also among the returning heroes were various members of the Avengers. Missing from the group were Captain America, Thor, and the leader of Latveria, Doctor Doom, though reports of their deaths may be premature at this time (see related article).

Words cannot describe the feeling that erupted through the teeming throngs of New Yorkers upon hearing the news. For the Yankee fan, it's like finding out that Babe Ruth is back in the lineup. For the Knicks fan, it's the return of Walter Frazier. And for the millions of people around the world who have come to respect and adore those who would put their lives on the line, it was like Christmas in October.

-Continued in HEROES RETURN #1-4

FF MAY NOT BE THE ONLY RETURNING HEROES

Bill Tatters BUGLE

The cosmic phenomenon which the Fantastic Four rode back from the seeming dead to Earth may have transported many other heroes to safety as well. While Reed and Sue Richards (Mr. Fantastic and the Invisible Woman, respectively), Ben Grimm (the Thing) and Johnny Storm (the Human Torch) may have been safely deposited into New York's Central Park, the site of their apparent deaths several months ago, it appears that some other heroes may have been less lucky.

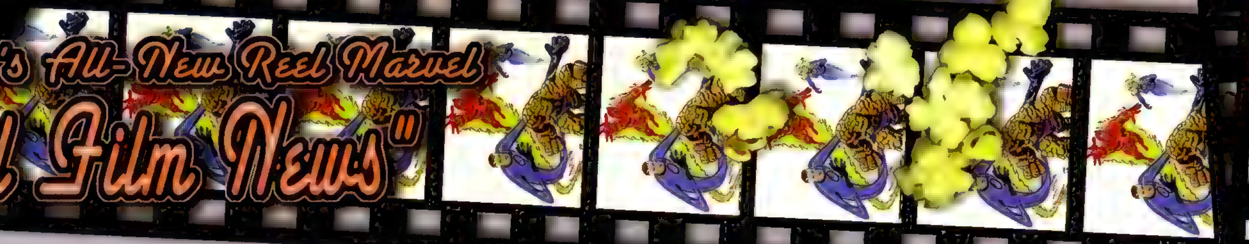
"We lost control of our vehicle," related Dr. Richards. "We became unbalanced and our craft began to fracture into pieces." Ben Grimm, a former pilot, was more succinct in his analysis: "Basically, the darned thing just fell apart when we hit some turbulence. I guess wider *is* better!" Several of the missing heroes, at first feared dead, were later believed to have landed in various countries around the planet, giving new hope to those who'd thought the Earth's protectors deceased following their assault on Onslaught.

Following the Fantastic Four's reappearance, rampant rumors immediately began to spread across many cities of many countries around the world. In Japan, where the premiere of "The Legend of Captain America," a film about his career and accomplishments, is about to open to moviegoers, rumors of Captain America's return have been circulating with ferocious intensity. While police there are dismissing the reports as products of enthusiasm in light of the movie premiere, numerous civilians are standing by their belief that Captain America has indeed returned. His unconfirmed reappearance, coupled with the fact that all the heroes who were believed dead only to now return, suggests that all the still-missing heroes may in fact not be missing at all.

-Continued in CAPTAIN AMERICA #1 and FANTASTIC FOUR #1

Andy Mangels's All-New Reel Marvel

"Marvel Film News"



Each year, Hollywood spews out a massive amount of movies, television series, and animated shows. Yet even with the output at staggering proportions, many projects that are developed for the big and small screen never make it beyond concept stages or storyboards.

Last month, we gave you a peek at dozens of projects in development for television, but this month, we're taking a look at Marvel's plans for the big screen! Which of your favorite characters could soon be up on a movie marquee? Read on!

MARVEL MOVIES

Black Panther (Columbia): Set to star Wesley Snipes; producer is Wesley Snipes's Amon Ra.

Blade: Vampire Hunter (New Line): Now In Production; release expected for Winter or Spring 1998; starring Wesley Snipes as Blade, Stephen Dorff as Frost, Kris Kristofferson as Whistler, Donal Logue as Quinn, and N'Bushe Wright as the female lead, Karen. Traci Lords is also in the cast, as are Alry Jover, Sanaa Lathan, and Kevin Patrick Walls (Scream) as Krieger; directed by Stephen Norrington; script by David Goyer (The Crow); producers are Peter Frankfurt, Bob Engleman, and Wesley Snipes. Stan Lee will make a cameo appearance in the film as a police officer!

Captain America (Paramount): Script by Larry Wilson (Beetlejuice) and Les Bohem (Dante's Peak); producers are Mark Gordon and Gary Levinsohn of Cloud Nine (Broken Arrow, Speed).

Daredevil (Fox): To be directed by Carlo Carlei; script by J. Marc DeMatteis (after Chris Columbus); producers are Chris Columbus' 1492 Productions and Ben Myron.

Dr. Strange (Columbia): script by Jeff Welch (following a script by David Goyer); producer is Brillstein-Grey.

Fantastic Four (Fox): To be directed by Pete Segal (Tommy Boy); script by Mike France (Goldeneye) and Chris Columbus; producers are Chris Columbus's 1492 Prods. and Constantin Films. The film will have extensive CGI (computer generated imagery) effects, and will feature Doctor Doom as the villain.

Ghost Rider (Pacific Western): Script by Jonathan Hensleigh (Jumanji), after a script by the ever-present David Goyer. Producer is Gale Ann Hurd.

The Incredible Hulk (Universal): After years in development, The Incredible Hulk is set to go to film soon! Writer Jonathan Hensleigh (The Rock and The Saint) scripted and will make his directorial debut on the feature, which is being produced by Gale Ann Hurd for Universal Pictures. Filming begins early this winter on location in Arizona. ILM will likely be handling the special effects sequences. The story is close to the traditional Hulk origin, with Dr. Bruce Banner becoming the Hulk in an experiment gone awry. Unfortunately, that same experiment creates three other gamma-powered villains, and the Hulk must stop them!

Iron Man (Fox): Talks have gone on with Nicholas Cage (The Rock) to play Tony Stark, but his recent plans to play a competing comic character - who's also a man of steel - may mean he'll bow out; Script by Jeff Vintar (after Andrew Chapman); producers are John Langley, Stephen Chao, Elie Cohn.

Kull the Conqueror (Summer, Universal) Robert E. Howard's other barbarian hero comes to the screen, starring Hercules hunk Kevin Sorbo in the title role. Shot in Slovakia, the film also stars Tia Carrere as Akivasha, a witch that has been asleep for three thousand years, and who is the only one who can depose King Kull. To save his throne and defeat the witch, the ex-mercenary Kull teams up with a slave girl (Carrina Lombard) and a priest (Litefoot). Thomas Ian Griffith and Harvey Fierstein also star. John Nicolella directed the film, from Charles Pogue's script. Rafaella De Laurentis is the producer, following her father Dino De Laurentis's footsteps (he produced the Conan films).

Luke Cage (Universal): Set to star John Singleton; script by J.D. Zeik (after Joe Doughrity); director is John Singleton; producers are Ed Pressman and John Singleton.

Mort, The Dead Teenager (Dreamworks): Current script is by John Payson and Larry Hama, though new writers may be coming aboard; producers are Gabrielle Kelly and Zachary Feuer.

Prime (Universal): Script by John Turman; producer is Chuck Gordon; seems to be stalled.

Silver Surfer (Fox): Release expected for Summer 1998; to be directed by Geoffrey Wright (Romper Stomper); script by Richard Jeffries (after John Turman); producers are Neue Constantin Films and 20th Century Fox. CGI morphing technology will be used to create the Surfer's metallic look, making him look similar to the villain of Terminator 2. Galactus is, of course, the villain.

Spider-Man (MGM): Release expected for Memorial Day 1999; rumored to star unknown Canadian actor Martin Gero as Peter Parker/Spider-Man; to be directed by James Cameron; script by James Cameron; producer is James Cameron's Lightstorm Entertainment. This has been in development since before many of this magazine's readers have been alive!

Venom (New Line): Script by David Goyer; producers are John Langley and Stephen Chao.

X-Men (Fox): Release expected for Christmas 1998; to be directed by Bryan Singer (Usual Suspects and the upcoming Stephen King's Apt Pupil); script by Ed Solomon (Men In Black); Producers are Lauren Shuler-Donner and Richard Donner (Superman). In a Daily Variety interview, Singer said, "We're taking the subject matter very seriously. This will not be a comic-book style film, for the X-Men are an ensemble of anti-heroes, and we've figured out a way to make the story accessible to fans and non-fans alike. The story deals with the origins of the characters, but it's not completely based on the first comic book." Wolverine will be a prominent character in the film, which is also slated to include Cyclops, Professor X, and Sabretooth.

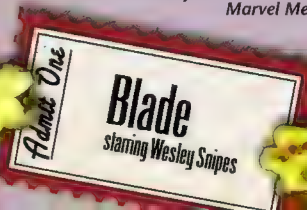
Coming Next Month in Marvel Vision:
A closer look at Conan: The Adventurer and an exclusive interview with the star of the new series!

Andy Mangels has been chronicling the history of comic book movies and TV shows for a variety of magazines over the last decade, as well as writing comics such as Bloodwulf, Sliders, and Star Wars: Boba Fett. Resurrected from the pages of Marvel Age Magazine, Andy Mangels's All-New Reel Marvel will be a semi-regular feature in Marvel Vision. He is also the new co-writer of Marvel's Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, as of issue #10!

MARVEL MOVIE QUIZ

Here's a Reel Marvel quiz for you: Name the only Marvel feature film ever released to theatres in the U.S.; Name the only Marvel feature film made that has never been released anywhere; Name the two Marvel direct-to-video films; Name Marvel's only feature serial; Name the animated Marvel film released in Japan. The answers will be revealed in next month's letters page. The first five winners picked randomly will receive a prize.

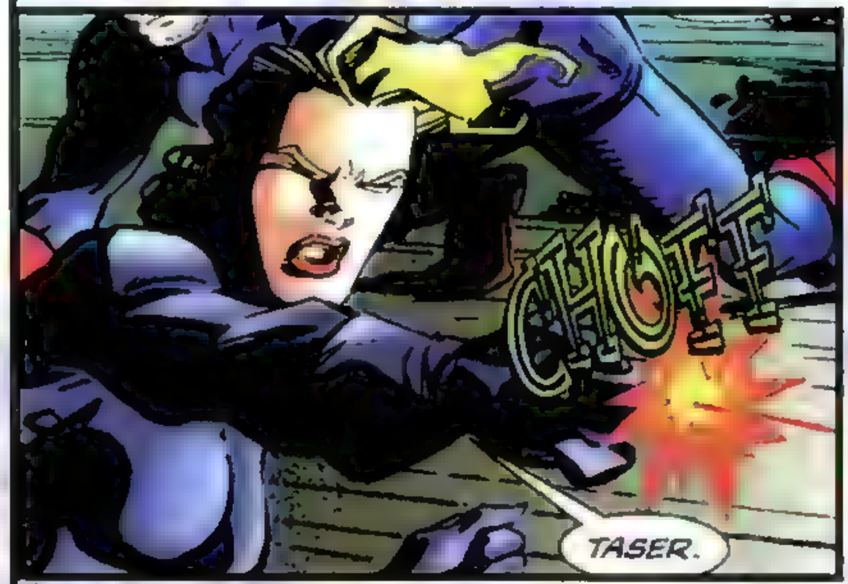
Send your answers to :
Marvel Media Contest
c/o Marvel VISION
387 Park Ave. So.
New York, NY 10016



HEROES RETURN PART 3

WHEN THE SUPPORTING CAST RETURNS

by Peter Sanderson



In our last issue we told you about the plans to bring Captain America, Iron Man, the Avengers, and the Fantastic Four back to the Marvel Universe in this fall's HEROES RETURN books. But no hero or heroes can support a series all by themselves. Where would they be without the villains they fight, their romantic interests, or their friends and confidantes? And so, in rethinking the returning heroes' series, their new editors and writers have also been coming up with new plans for their supporting casts.

But those of you who read last month's HEROES RETURN story know that their new writers are wary about giving too much away beforehand; they would prefer you find out what's going to happen from reading the stories, not from reading about the stories months in advance.

Still, they're certainly willing to discuss the personalities of certain supporting characters, even if they prefer not to say what exactly will happen to them. And they will drop some hints about forthcoming developments to whet your interest.

Mark Waid was the writer on CAPTAIN AMERICA before HEROES REBORN, and in his first run on the series he brought back Cap's longtime girlfriend, S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Sharon Carter, who had long been thought dead. She was very different on her return, her outlook on life having grown harsher as a result of her terrible experiences during her long absence.

Now that Waid is back on CAPTAIN AMERICA, he says Sharon will definitely return, although she will not appear in every story as she did before. Waid comments that "she's a great counterpoint to Cap because she's the cynic and he's the idealist."

As for villains, "We've talked about taking Batroc and actually giving him a shave and getting him out of the clown suit and making him into someone formidable." And, of course, "Clearly the Red Skull can't stay gone forever." Mind you, Waid notes, "The last time we saw the Skull he was a Hiroshima shadow on the side of a building." One might think that would defy even the Red Skull's talent for survival. But, Waid points out, "he was infused with a cataclysmic explosion of Cosmic Cube energy at the time," so chances are he is somewhere out there plotting away

THE FANTASTIC FOUR is renowned for its large, wonderfully varied supporting cast. However, its new writer, Scott Lobdell, intends not to use some familiar FF cast members such as Doctor Doom and Galactus, at least for the first year. Lobdell believes characters like these may be reaching the point of overexposure.

But he has plenty of ideas for new menaces for the Fantastic Four to meet. For example, at present, Galactus is apparently absent from the Marvel Universe. "But," Lobdell notes, "Galactus is a primal force of the universe. Nature abhors a vacuum, so what springs up in his place?" His answer is a being known as One, whom FF readers will soon encounter.

Then there is Crucible, a man who is somehow connected with the same mysterious cult of monks who once forged Doctor Doom's mask and armor. The Negative Man is a human being who simultaneously exists in two dimensions—the Negative Zone and Earth—and intends to destroy one of them. There will be a new mastermind, known only as the Presence, whom Lobdell describes as "determined to recreate the world in his image," and Demonicus, a cult leader out to welcome alien gods from space.

Lobdell likewise has plans for various established members of the Fantastic Four's rogues gallery, like the Puppet Master, whose radioactive clay will have wreaked a strange change upon him, and a newly evolved version of the gigantic alien marauder Terminus. The Red Ghost and his Super-Apes will have mutated horrifically. And the Wizard will begin recreating his Frightful Four

team by turning the reformed Sandman back to his life of crime. But that is not all. Lobdell says that "the Wizard is going to engage in a deadly cat and mouse game with Reed, not unlike the way John Malkovitch terrorized and tormented Clint Eastwood in *In the Line Of Fire*."

But villains aren't Reed Richards's only problem once he returns. His father Nathaniel has disappeared along with practically all of the FF's scientific devices and vehicles, not to mention the fact that the Thunderbolts have taken over the FF's headquarters. Reed is going to have to recreate the FF's equipment practically from scratch. He will also set up a think tank called the Fantastic Foundation for the world's greatest minds, which will also serve as a springboard for new stories.

Feeling lonely, Johnny Storm, the Human Torch, is going to be looking for new romance and will find more than he might have expected. "He'll eventually find himself in what is traditionally the Betty/Veronica—Ginger/Maryann dilemma," Lobdell explains; "that is, he's equally attracted to the new Red Guardian, a Russian Jenny McCarthy-type fun-loving super heroine who loves all things American, and to Ebon, a beautiful and brilliant Wakandan scientist" from the land of the Black Panther. Ebon, Lobdell says, "falls in love with Johnny despite her best instincts. At one point, he'll ask her, 'What is a beautiful, brilliant woman like you doing with a fun-loving slacker like me?' To which she'll reply, 'Honestly? Because you're cute. Not much of an intellect, true—but cute as hell.'"

THE AVENGERS will have plenty of interaction among its large number of super hero cast members, although its new writer, Kurt Busiek, promises that their loyal butler Edwin Jarvis will show up a lot.

On the other hand, Busiek has a great deal to say about the role supporting characters will play in the other HEROES RETURN series he is writing, IRON MAN. For over more than three decades IRON MAN has built a wide and varied cast of characters around its hero, Tony Stark, but Busiek does not intend to bring the entire ensemble back at once. "I don't want to throw away any of the relationships and contacts that Tony has developed in the past," he says. "What I want to do is start with a clean break that enables me to bring them back in or send them off in a different direction as the series needs it. Rather than start with a supporting cast that other writers have built up over a long period of time, I'd rather start clean and build my own supporting cast that will include pre-existing characters aswell as being open to new characters."

The current continuity already gives a good reason for the absence of some former cast members from Tony's new life. "As of the time that Tony comes back to the Marvel Universe, Stark Enterprises is owned by the Fujikawa Corporation. So those various supporting characters who have been established as working for Stark Enterprises are now either working for Stark-Fujikawa, or for some reason or another, they left. Whether Tony will come back as the head of Stark-Fujikawa is an open question." In fact Tony will be creating a new company for himself in the Pacific Northwest.

Busiek says he likes a lot of IRON MAN's supporting characters, but knows that some of them are now committed to appearing in other books. For example, Stark's formidable assistant Mrs. Arbogast will be showing up in the new HEROES FOR HIRE book.

Some of the characters that Busiek would like to bring back may surprise readers. "There are characters like Yvette Avril that I'd like to do a lot more with," he says. Avril, who has not turned up in the series since the 1980s, was the beautiful and bespectacled head of Stark's Paris division whom he later transferred to his Long Island headquarters. She resigned when the late Obadiah Stane took over Stark's company and has not been seen since.

A big question is whether or not James Rhodes, who was once Tony's best friend and right-hand man, will return to the series. Rhodey substituted as Iron Man during Stark's long bout with alcoholism, and, after falling out with Tony, starred in his own book as the armored War Machine.

"I'd certainly like to address the relationship between Tony and Rhodey," Busiek says, "although I feel that Rhodey became a leading man in his own right, and going back to being a second banana doesn't feel right for the character. I'd like to see Rhodey in a position of some authority rather than being Tony's pal all over again: A friend but an equal."

Asked who he most likes among IRON MAN's supporting players, Busiek does not hesitate: "I'd have to say Happy Hogan and Pepper Potts are personal favorites." Happy, the boxer turned chauffeur and right-hand man, and Pepper, Stark's former secretary, go back nearly to the beginning of the IRON MAN series in the 1960s. For a time Tony and Pepper had unspoken romantic feelings for each other, but she ended up falling in love with Happy instead. They married and had children, but continued to turn up in Tony Stark's life from time to time.

"Pepper makes such a terrific foil for Tony in that Tony is wealthy, sophisticated, desirable, and all that, and Pepper plays sort of the Jean Arthur role," Busiek says, referring to a movie actress of the 1930s: "she's witty, she's acerbic. Despite the fact that she's been portrayed as very attractive at times in the past, her character is one that's built around a personality rather than around looks. When she was introduced she was the homely secretary who was secretly in love with her boss and did whatever she could to screw up his relationships with the glamorous women he dated. And Pepper grew from that into being a real friend, into someone who Tony could confide in. There had been the possibility of a romantic relationship, but it turned into something else. And I found that, combined with Pepper's sort of perky sassiness, to make for interesting dialogue and an enjoyable relationship. It's actually fairly similar to what Roger Stern had intended Mary Jane to become [in SPIDER-MAN,] but they went in a different direction with that.

"And I like Happy because he is almost the antithesis of Tony. He's not smart, he's not smooth, he's not suave in any way, but he's got a lot of style of his own. Happy just exudes energy and personality; it's difficult to improve on that. His history with both Tony and with Pepper gives him a lot of interesting ways to play off against both those characters.

"Either he or Pepper would have to be Tony's most loyal friend, and I don't know which of them would get the top slot. But both of them are devoted to Tony."

As for Iron Man's antagonists, Busiek believes that "one of the troubles about IRON MAN is that Iron Man has regularly been updated over the years, getting more powerful, sleeker, cooler armor, and his villains have largely not been updated. So [IRON MAN artist] Sean Chen and I, along with [editor] Tom Brevoort's help and input, are going to be refurbishing a lot of Iron Man's classic villains.

"What I like about the Controller has a lot more to do with his original conception as a spooky Gothic manipulator of people as in his first appearance"—written by Archie Goodwin— "than in his brawny, Hulk-level-strength power vampire character that he's appeared as almost every time since. So I would like to go back to a Controller who's really chilling.

"I really like Midas as a character," Busiek says, referring to the billionaire in an ancient Greek costume who once took over Stark's company, "but I don't think the time is really right for Iron Man to have a lot of trouble fighting a fat Greek guy. So we're going to be revamping Midas and making him a physical threat that works well with his history and motivations.

"I like the name of Firebrand, but I think that campus-radical-gone-bad is a

dated concept. We may well be seeing a new character conception for Firebrand.

"I like the Spymaster, but I've always hated his costume. The [original] Spymaster is also dead. Spymaster would almost seem to be a rank rather than a person. So who knows? Right off the top of my head I'm thinking right here it might be fun to do a story where there are several people vying for the role of Spymaster. Being Spymaster is like being top gun in the world of espionage for here."

As for Iron Man's traditional archenemy, Busiek states that "The Mandarin's been presented in so many different ways that we're really going to have to take him apart and put him back together again.

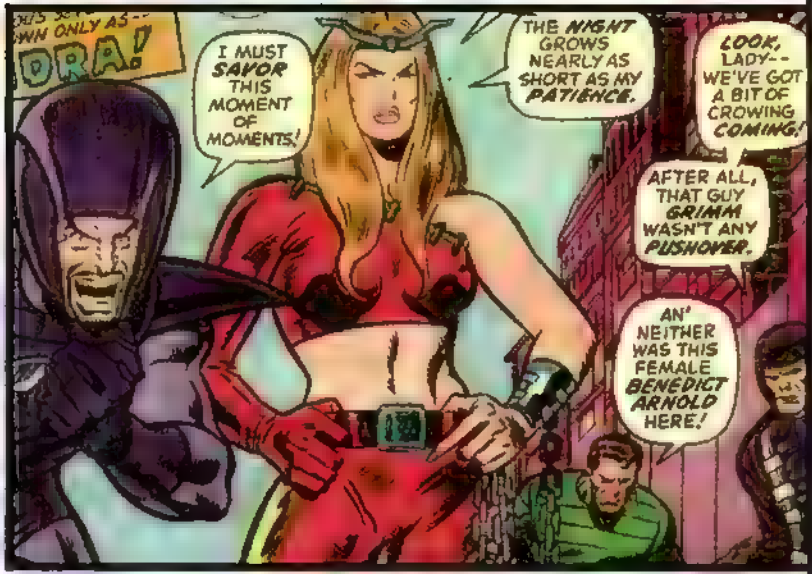
"Plus we've got new villains in mind. I'd like to bring on some villains who've been established but not seen very much: for instance, Sunset Bain, who made most of her appearances in MACHINE MAN and the MACHINE MAN 2020 mini-series, will make a great corporate foil for Tony."

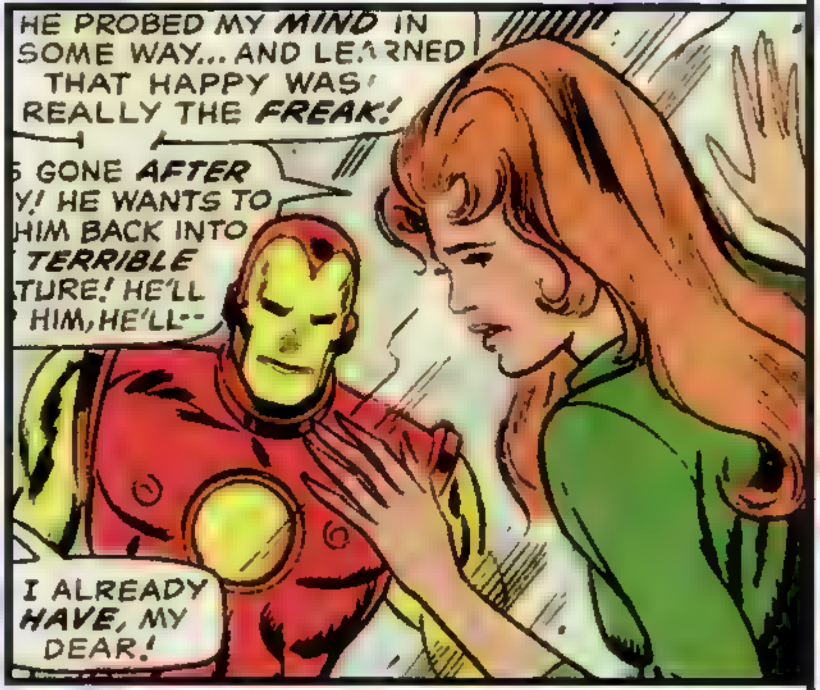
Tony Stark has always been renowned as a ladies' man, and, as Busiek notes, "It's one of the things that makes him different than Spider-Man or the Human Torch or any number of other super hero characters." He plans to give Tony a number of love interests in this first year, but "instead of Tony in a series of monogamous romances, I'd like to see Tony get involved with a number of very different women. In the kind of globetrotting adventurous life he'll have, it'd be easy for him to get involved with a woman in one locale, and then either she has to leave or he has to, so things are left unresolved, and the next time they meet, things may have changed.

"Back in the '30s and '40s when Milton Caniff was doing Terry and the Pirates," the legendary comic strip, Busiek recalls, "he had Pat Ryan get involved in a number of intertwining relationships with very different women, and Pat Ryan's relationship with Normandie Drake or his relationship with the Dragon Lady or with Burma made for very interesting drama and often fun comedy to boot, and illuminated different aspects of Pat as a character. And I think Tony is an ideal character to do that sort of thing with. If he's involved with Madame Masque, it's going to be a different kind of relationship than if he's involved with Bethany Cabe."

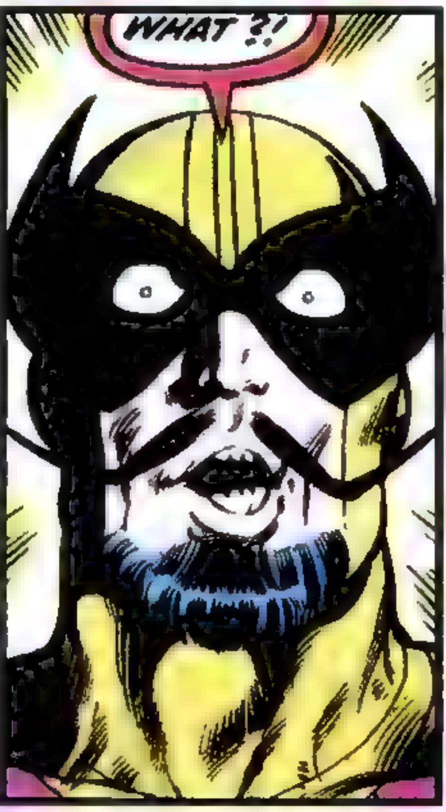
Madame Masque, you ask? Those who have read IRON MAN over the past two decades know Madame Masque as a villain, but she was once a very sympathetic character and even Tony's ally and lover. And she is another favorite of Busiek's. "Her heart is good; she has honor; she has loyalty; she has all the aspects of a heroic character. But because of the circumstances of life, she has been cast into the role of an outlaw. I think that a great deal of what she's done since the death of her father has been the result of fairly understandable paranoia brought upon by the fact that virtually every man she's ever been involved with, from her father to Tony to Jasper Sitwell to her fiancé, has betrayed her. So she's not an evil person, but she has been cast in circumstances where she's done some very bad things, and feels that she can't change, because if she does open up again she'll just get kicked in the guts again."

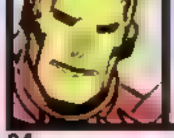
But why are we talking about the original Madame Masque? She won't be coming back! She's definitely dead. "Oh, you think so?" says Kurt Busiek. Well, we saw her buried. Tony even identified the body. "Absolutely," agrees Busiek. "All of that"—he takes a pause— "is true. Tony Stark did indeed identify her corpse, she was indeed buried, that corpse was indeed dead. That's not the end of the story." And as you can see, the stories of the HEROES RETURN books are only beginning, and promise many twists and surprises over the coming years.



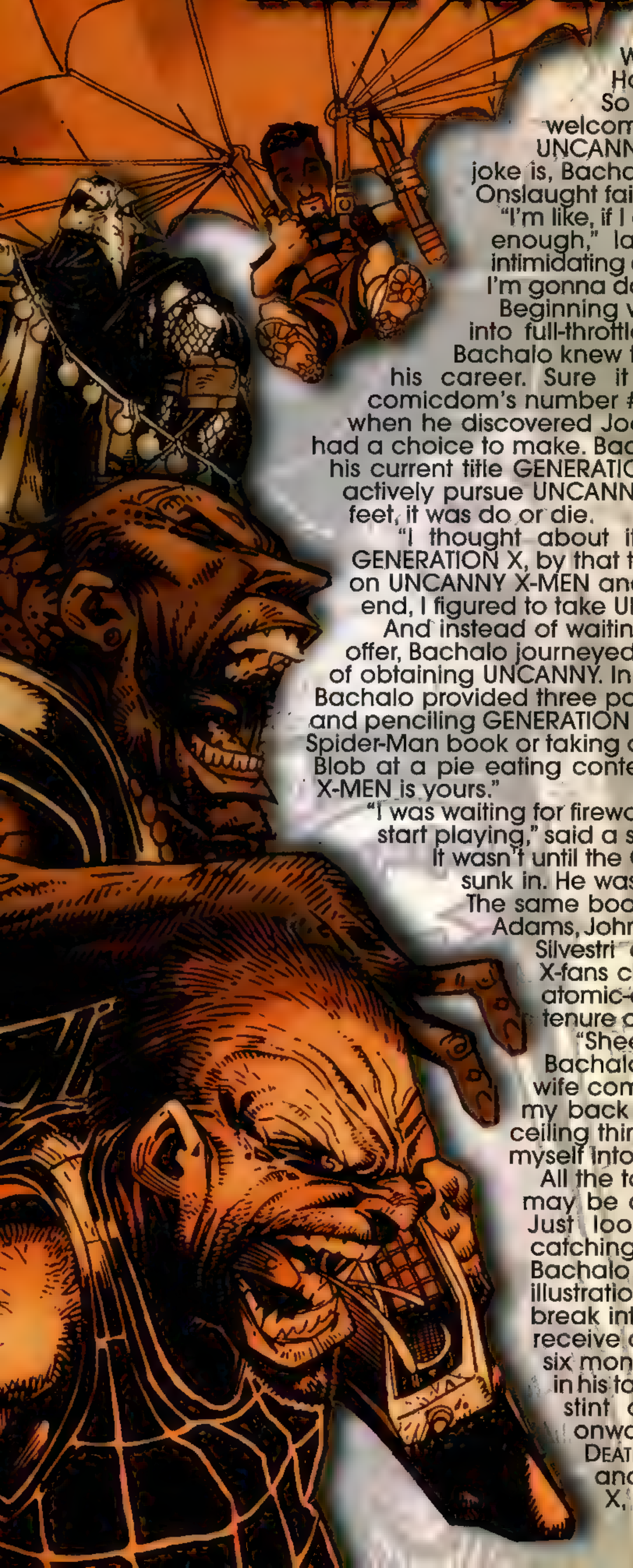


"We've talked about taking Batroc and actually giving him a shave and getting him out of the clown suit and making him into someone formidable."





Chris Bachalo
goes to school! (again)



Welcome to the X-Men, Chris Bachalo! Hope THEY survive the experience!

So it's hardly the Hallmark red-carpet welcome-wagon greeting you'd expect for the UNCANNY X-MEN's new penciler but the inside joke is, Bachalo teases, he doesn't want to do what Onslaught failed to accomplish: kill the X-Men!

"I'm like, if I don't destroy the book that will be good enough," laughs the 31-year-old artist. "It's very intimidating and an honor to be on UNCANNY X-MEN. I'm gonna do my best to maintain the standard."

Beginning with a fill-in on issue #349 before shifting into full-throttle as regular artist three months later, Bachalo knew this would be the greatest challenge of his career. Sure it was always his goal to work on comicdom's number #1 title (heck, whose goal isn't it?), and when he discovered Joe Madureira would be bowing out, he had a choice to make. Bachalo initially considered remaining on his current title GENERATION X until #50 at which time he would actively pursue UNCANNY, but with a golden opportunity at his feet, it was do or die.

"I thought about it and knew if I waited and got off GENERATION X, by that time Marvel would have someone else on UNCANNY X-MEN and be reluctant to move them off. In the end, I figured to take UNCANNY while it was available."

And instead of waiting for Marvel to approach him with the offer, Bachalo journeyed to the Big Apple with the sole purpose of obtaining UNCANNY. In a discussion with top dog Bob Harras, Bachalo provided three possible work scenarios including writing and penciling GENERATION X, lending his considerable talents to a Spider-Man book or taking over UNCANNY X-MEN. Quicker than the Blob at a pie eating contest, Harras declared, "Great, UNCANNY X-MEN is yours."

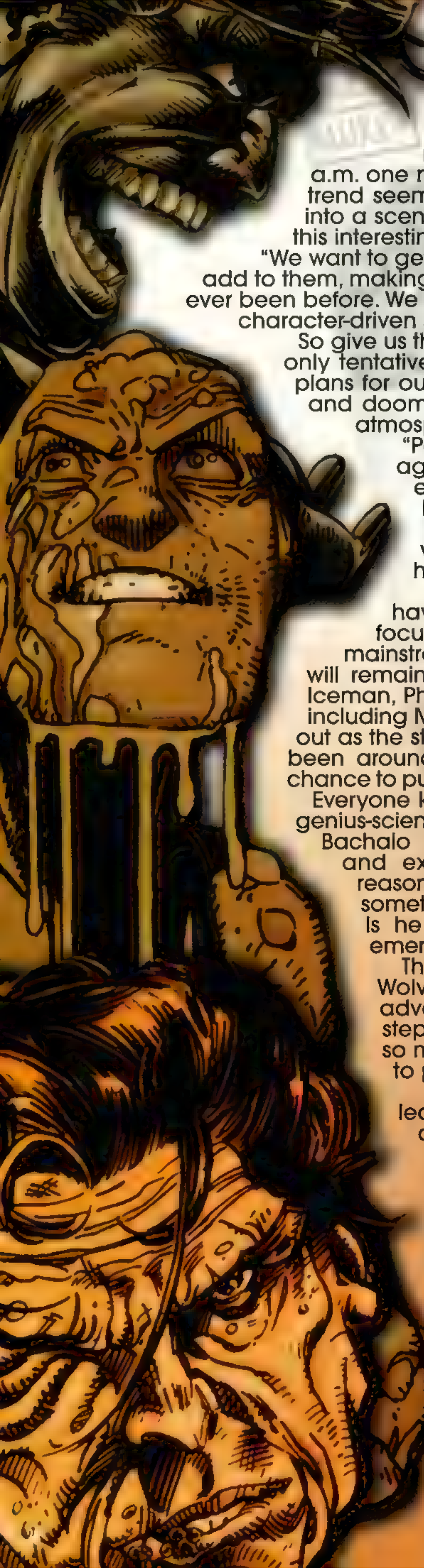
"I was waiting for fireworks to go off or a band to come in and start playing," said a startled Bachalo.

It wasn't until the California resident returned home that it sunk in. He was the new penciler on UNCANNY X-MEN. The same book that spawned artistic talents like Neal Adams, John Byrne, Paul Smith, Dave Cockrum, Marc Silvestri and Jim Lee. The same book X-cited X-fans clamor for every month. The same book atomic-explosive Madureira had just ended his tenure on. Then the symptoms hit hard.

"Sheer intimidation, breaking out in hives," Bachalo describes his newfound anxieties. "My wife comes in my studio and I'm lying there on my back on the hardwood floors staring at the ceiling thinking, 'Oh my God, what have I gotten myself into?'"

All the toil, trouble and turmoil bubbling inside may be a bit hard for outsiders to understand. Just look at the guy's track record. After catching the comic-collector-craze at age 10, Bachalo went on to receive a college degree in illustration. Soon, the determined novice tried to break into the major comic companies only to receive a handful of rejection letters. Yet a short six months later, DC showed a spark of interest in his talent which eventually led to a successful stint on SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN. It was onwards and upwards from there with two DEATH miniseries, an issue of X-MEN UNLIMITED and his then coup-de-grace, GENERATION X, which he co-created.

If any self-doubts still existed, Bachalo



demonstrated no trace at the San Diego ComicCon as he discussed the X-Men's future. In fact, his waves of energy and enthusiasm were contagious. While San Diego is the party-hearty center for comic lovers, Bachalo and new X-Men writer Steven T. Seagle stayed up until 2 a.m. one night pitching concepts. He remarks the current story trend seems to be more event-driven. That is, throw the heroes into a scenario and see how they react rather than focusing on this interesting band of mutants which is the primary story itself.

"We want to get on the book, take this core group of characters and add to them, making them more interesting and rounded than they have ever been before. We want to talk about people and who they are and tell character-driven stories"

So give us the scoop, Chris! What's going on? Stressing things are only tentative at this point, he revealed some of the "top secret" plans for our favorite mutants. For one thing, he says the gloom and doom aspects will be disappearing with a more relaxed atmosphere replacing it.

"People don't go around thinking the whole world is against them," he explains. "They have times when they enjoy everything like Storm enjoys the earth. They've had these powers for a long time now, and our feeling is a lot of them have come to terms with who and what they are. They don't walk around moping about how cursed they are."

Thankfully for readers, the creative powers-that-be have no intention of shaking up the status quo but will be focusing more on the core members. Long-standing mainstreamers such as Rogue, Wolverine, Storm and Bishop will remain pivotal players along with the original fab five of Iceman, Phoenix, Cyclops, Beast and Archangel. Newer arrivals including Maggott, Marrow and Dr. Cecilia Reyes will float in and out as the story dictates. Bachalo notes many of the X-Men have been around forever and this is their (Bachalo's and Seagle's) chance to put a distinctive spin on them. Who's first on the agenda? Everyone knows the Beast is the furry-blue-happy-go-lucky-joker-genius-scientist. They also feel that he's B-O-R-I-N-G. Seagle and Bachalo want to spice him up by delving into his psyche and exploring why he acts the way he does. They've reasoned most wisecracking clowns usually try to hide something so when Beast is alone, does he act differently? Is he sad and melancholic? A "darker" Beast may be emerging in the future.

Then there's the pint-size, all-attitude, older-than-Moses Wolverine who has a history littered with globetrotting, adventures, enemies and contacts. It may be high time to step back and explore these elements. In addition, with so much experience, the Canucklehead could be ready to progress to the next stage.

"Professor Xavier is gone, so would he be a good leader for the book, or maybe he's better as second-in-command," suggests Bachalo.

Oh and lest we forget, there have been talks about bringing back Wolvie's calling card, adamantium claws, I believe they are called.

One general consensus is not only does everyone hate Jean Grey's costume but the telepathic-telekinectic redhead has all the personality of a reanimated corpse. Bachalo says both these points will be addressed but costume renovations should be defined by the circumstances, not fashion sense.

"Let's not change the outfit for the sake of change. Let's make it important so it has something to do with the person's character make-up and what's happening at the time. They have a traumatic experience in their lives and all of a sudden there are changes in costume and character too."

Hmm..... traumatic experiences? Sounds like things don't bode well for Grey, then. "If something happens to her, it will probably have to do with the

fact she's died a couple of times and there are side effects."

Sorry, if I give anymore away Bachalo will have to kill you. Or worse, me. Let's just say there are plans under way for Rogue, Bishop and Angel to boot. Checklist please. Strong art and writing equals a successful book. That's it? Not quite.

Part of building the new X-empire includes involving all of the creative team like the inker, which is important to Bachalo. In this case, it's current UNCANNY inking guru Tim Townsend, who has graced the X-pages for the last few years. Bachalo notes often inkers are treated as the "sixth toe on the foot" and are kept out of the loop. Already ideas expressed between the two have been forwarded to Seagle in an effort to make the book a more family-collaborative effort.

"In the beginning, Townsend was very tentative and wasn't sure what to expect from me, and the more we talked, the more excited he got and vice versa," said Bachalo. "I'm a big fan of his and I don't think it's a stretch to say he's the best inker in the industry today."

Townsend, who has inked over Bachalo on two separate occasions, is also looking forward to the partnership and camaraderie involved. Already in sync with goals, direction and ideas in mind, Townsend says inking Bachalo's powerful and tight pencils will prove to be a true labor of love for him.

"Since there's so much there, it's gonna be a challenge for me to shine through and really get flashy and show what I can do," he says. "But I'm definitely up for it. Our work is going to hit the next level."

Some fans may be thinking that Bachalo's art is too cartoony for the X-Men. If they are, for shame. All you have to do is look at his portfolio to know he's an artistic chameleon. Take GENERATION X-it's about fresh, inexperienced, quirky new mutants on the block with a flashy feel. Bachalo says he suited them up in trendy clothes and employed magna to make them appear younger.

"Then there's a book like UNCANNY X-MEN," he counters. "This is about a well-established, strong group of superheroes. They're big and mature and it's gonna have a different flavor."

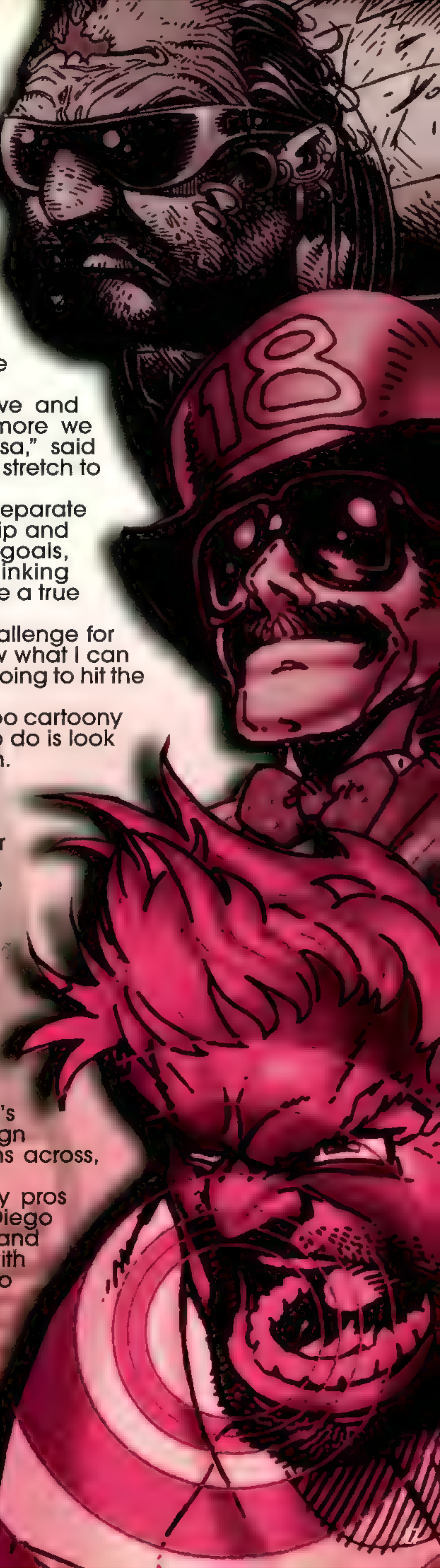
This will be reflected with more dramatic visuals, detail, intensity and less cartoonish art.

If that's not enough, Townsend's vote of confidence sums it up.

"What's not to like about his art? He's absolutely 100% original and in this day and age that is a rare thing to find: the energy he portrays, his design sense and the way he lays out pages. He's got an uncanny, no pun intended, knack for design elements, portraying a mood, for getting emotions across, facial expressions. He's truly unique."

More importantly, Bachalo has a quality many pros today are lacking. At the signing booth at the San Diego ComicCon, you can see a radiance in his eyes and hear the eagerness in his voice as he yaks it up with the fans. Earlier during our interview, Bachalo mentioned he was born a Canuck like me. Bachalo unexpectedly began to belt out part of the Canadian anthem. At that moment, like a bolt of lightning, it struck me. Penciling is his career but there's something more here which leaps out in his work. Bachalo is having fun and after all, that's what comics is all about.

....*By Bryan Cairns*



TIME SLIP
GHOST RIDER

WELCOME TO THE MARVEL UNIVERSE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN IF TODAY'S HOTTEST CREATORS HAD BEEN AROUND AT THE BIRTH OF MARVEL COMICS. THINK OF THIS AS THE WORLD THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN. THINK OF IT AS THE WORLD THAT MIGHT STILL BE COMING.

Glenn Fabry, whose painted works and storytelling on 2000 A.D.'s Slaine The Horned God, Hellblazer covers, and covers for the award-winning Preacher totally blew fans away, brings his ability to paint the freakish to Marvel's own Ghost Rider.

Everyone knows of the terrible tragedy of young Dan Ketch, of the night that destiny forever changed his life and transformed him into the Ghost Rider. It was an ancient power he stumbled upon... a power that once held Johnny Blaze, the original Ghost Rider, in its grip. And from that dread night on, Dan Ketch... whenever innocent blood was spilt... was pulled inside out and transformed into the Spirit Of Vengeance– the Ghost Rider.

But in the world of Time Slip... the world where Glen Fabry designs the Ghost Rider... the Dan Ketch Ghost Rider was never seen on Earth. For here, the war is fought closer to the source. When Dan Ketch touched the glowing symbol in the graveyard, the earth opened its jaws and trees spread their roots and Dan Ketch was pulled kicking and screaming down to the flaming tar and rotted pavement that leads to oblivion.

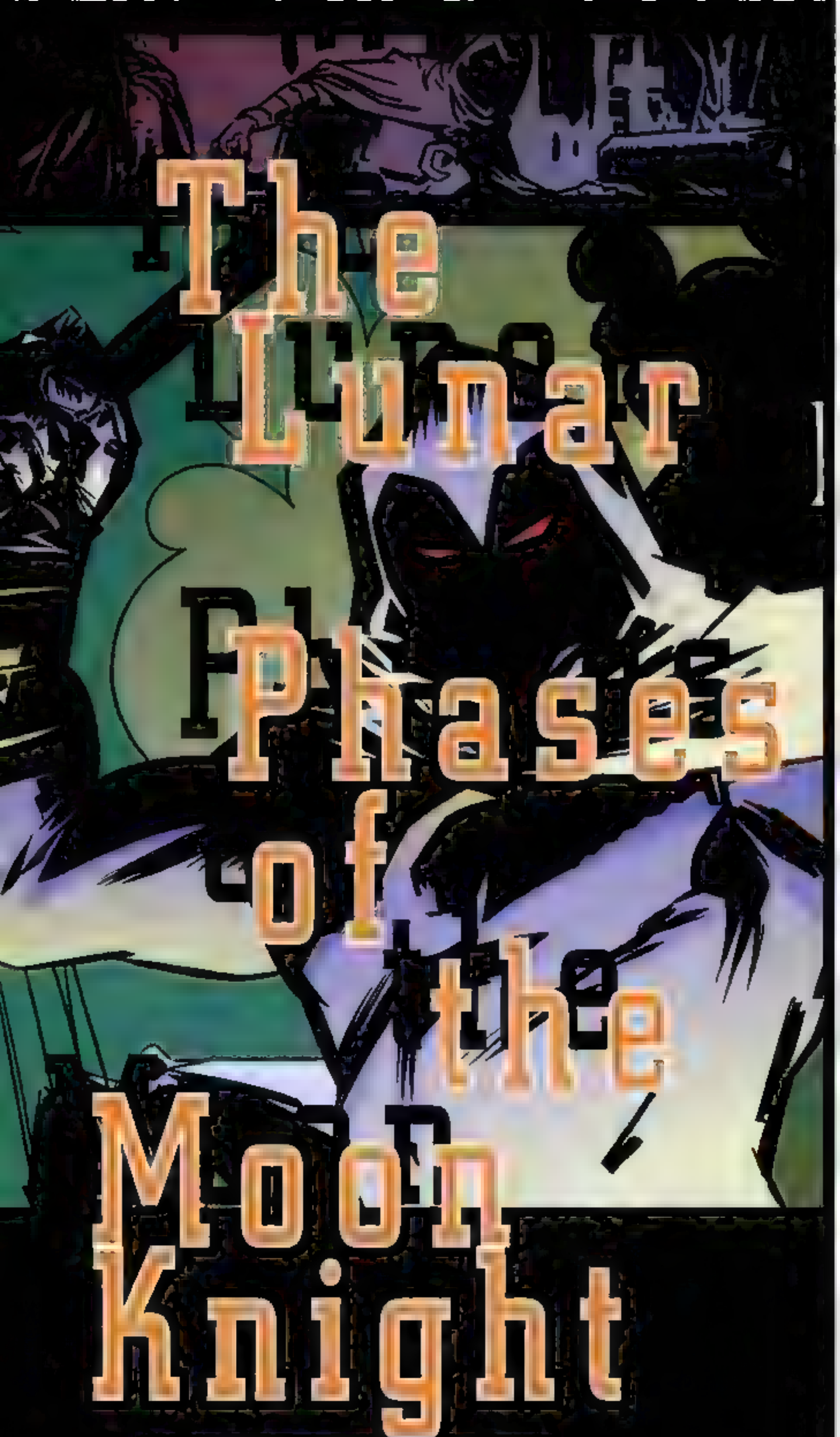
They say the road to that oblivion is paved with good intentions. It's not, you know. It's paved with the cartilage of cowards– and the bone and marrow of mediocrity. And it's no road. It's a highway. Route 666. And when Dan Ketch became the Ghost Rider, he became the law.

Demons and renegade cursed ones are unrelenting in their attempts to escape their sentences and make their way up to the neutral zone which we call Earth.

Together with Chucky, the best condemned deputy in the underworld, Ghost Rider is a trail-blazer, patrolling Route 666 and guaranteeing that no demon, or wisp, or poltergeist, or incubus, or succubus, or ghoul, or harpy, or wraith, ever crosses the border from their world into ours.

So when you hear of those who've lived through a near-death experience speak of a bright light coming towards them moments before they were brought back to the land of the living–know that it is no bright light–but the flaming skull of the Ghost Rider–carrying out his duty by making sure that there are no illegal aliens in the next world.

The Lunar Phases of the Moon Knight



by Bryan Cairns

It's hard to explain the appeal of the super hero Moon Knight. A former mercenary with a conscience named Marc Spector, he has already died and returned to the living, but then again what hero hasn't escaped the Grim Reaper's lethal grasp at least once? Maybe it's the realism creator Doug Moench had grounded Moon Knight in, digging deep into the psyche of an ordinary man who dons a costume to battle evil. He has no flashy superpowers but instead relies on an aggressive kick-butt fighting style and an arsenal of weapons. Of course, it could be his cool silver and black threads which capture the essence of the mysterious moon. Oh, what's the point in debating this anyway? Moon Knight has been worm food since he died in an explosion at the end of his third series. Unless of course that was all a hallucination. Unless the moon god Khonshu revives him again. Unless the twisted genius of Moench returns to the writing helm after 15 years to resurrect his '70s creation and catapult our avenging ghost into his greatest challenge yet. Agatha Christie sleuths be prepared as Spector searches for the truth over his born-again revival while dealing with a jamboree of old foes who have resurfaced.

"The mystery is Moon Knight comes back to life and he's not really sure what happened or if it's all a dream," explains Moench as he sets up the scene for the hero's rebirth. At the end of issue #1 of the new four-issue limited series, Spector "is lying in darkness and it turns out he's being dug out of his grave, literally being resurrected. He sits up out of the grave with the dirt coming off and there's Stained Glass Scarlet with a shovel. She tells him some stuff and it's kind of surreal. Then a door bangs open and Black Spectre comes out; then there is a series of vignettes which don't seem to make much sense, but they're all foreshadowing things. When he does come back to life, his mission is to solve the mystery of his seeming death. Or maybe he never died and it was all a hallucination induced by the dream demon Morpheus. Maybe he never really died; he never really knows."

Confused? Then imagine how poor Spector feels. Originally, he was a soldier-for-hire serving as second in command to the death-mask-sporting terrorist Bushman. During a raid on a rebel camp south of the Egyptian border, Spector was disgusted by his boss' thirst for violence, especially when the civilians were executed in cold blood. Spector retaliated by attacking Bushman but was knocked unconscious and dumped in the desert to die. Finding his way to a pharaoh's tomb, he collapsed and seemingly died from his injuries. However fate, or rather Khonshu, supposedly intervened and gave him a second chance at life. To atone for his shady mercenary past, Spector dubbed himself Moon Knight and became Khonshu's night avenger.

Now Spector must question the role Khonshu has taken in his life and whether there is a supernatural power or is it really just a plain Jane statue he has been assuming had powers. "In other words, is this all in his mind?" poses Moench. "Did the statue really bring him back to life in the origin or was he not really dead and only thought it did?"

Furthermore, why did Stained Glass Scarlet become involved? Sure, she's a fallen-nun-turned-vigilante-executioner who killed her only son who just happened to be a mad dog murderer. And, yes, Moon Knight never approved of her actions, but they had reached a certain understanding. Now, with powerful forces at work, it's her sense of justice and concern which has forced Scarlet to seek an ally.

"I thought she was the perfect instrument of all the original characters to bring him back from the dead,

partially because of her religious background and partially because she's this enigmatic, haunting character in this long red cloak and hood. Who else would be the one?" asks Moench. "And also Scarlet is the one who knows Black Spectre has started a power shift in the city. She would be the one who needs Moon Knight's help the most, but he doesn't even know if this really happened."

In what could be a Bobby Ewing dream sequence, after digging up Spector, Scarlet reveals Black Spectre has been released from prison. In the past, Carson Knowles, a.k.a. Black Spectre, was a former war hero who returned home to find his wife and son had deserted him, his job was no longer available and things just kept getting worse. Knowles finally snapped when he was almost mugged and vowed to destroy the city. Modeling himself as Moon Knight's mirror image, Knowles ran for mayor while adopting the Black Spectre disguise to force political bosses to support his alter ego. This time around, Black Spectre is the dominant persona as he attempts to control the city from behind the scenes. He's playing grand poobah as he gathers various crime elements together to serve him as well as intimidating the people who run the city.

But certain aspects of this dream may turn out to be more than déjà-vu and visions. When Scarlet was hovering over Spector with her warnings, she shot a crossbow bolt into a distinctive door and painted her symbol of an "S" in a diamond around it. Later when he returns to Grant Mansion, he discovers a similar looking closet door with the crossbolt and symbol. To get to the bottom of things, he confronts Scarlet about her involvement, but she never gives a straight answer. Just like a labyrinth with every corner a dead end, nothing is easy for our hero.

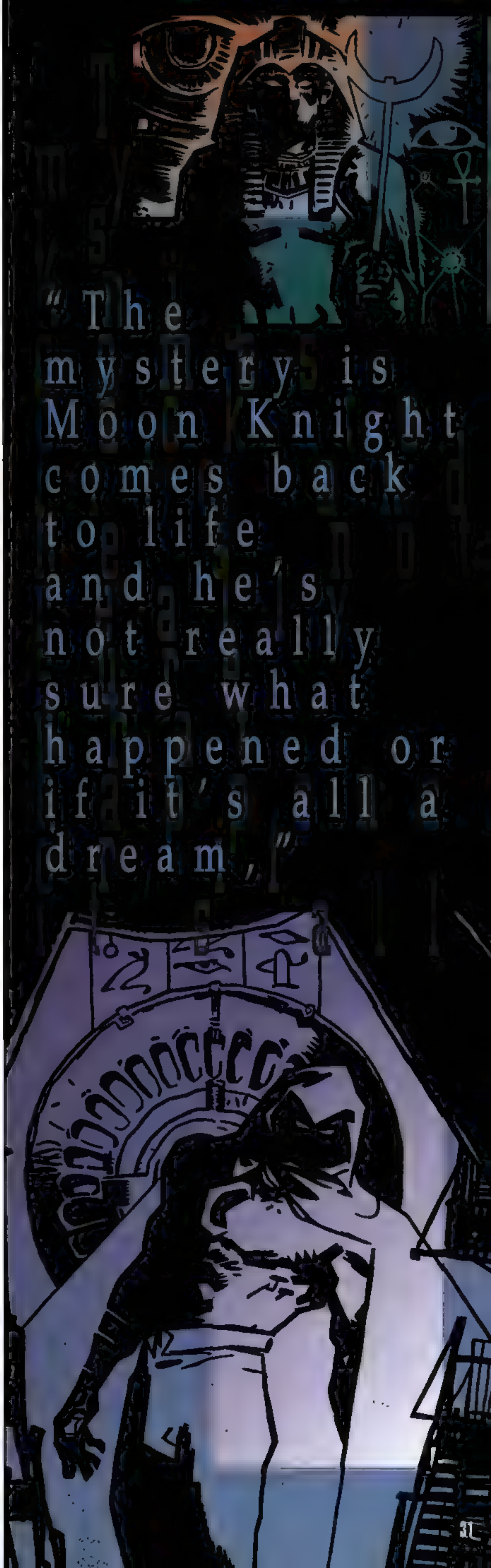
As if there weren't enough twists and turns and red herrings, an archaeological dig uncovers a newly discovered Set statue in an Egyptian tomb. Mythology dictates this dark god was a beast who slew the good Osiris and chopped his body into pieces, only to scatter them along the Nile. "Set is pretty much the closest thing the Egyptians have to Satan," points out Moench. "You have the god of the moon, which is the lightness in the darkness, and now we have a god of darkness. And just as Khonshu's statue is white, this one is made of gleaming black rock."

Whether the Set statue really houses the evil god's spirit remains part of the puzzle. Moench also hints the statue may or may not be manipulating a number of old Moon Knight antagonists such as Bushman, Morpheus, Black Spectre and Jack Russell, the Werewolf by Night. Coincidentally, Bushman is in Egypt with an unknown agenda, possibly for the statue.

"It's a convoluted story, but it's not confusing or complicated. It all unwinds in a nice ball," promises Moench. "But nothing is known for sure until it all falls into place."

Perhaps the most straightforward element of the storyline is Moench's back-to-the-basics portrayal of Moon Knight. It's no secret the writer hasn't been too fond of how the Fist of Khonshu has been handled since his departure. In fact, when editor Mark Bernardo approached him about doing a Moon Knight limited series, Moench says he was hesitant.

He had that "you can't go home mentality" but at the same time felt his tenure was cut short when the series was canceled. Marvel's revised premise was since Moon Knight was deceased, they would have a new guy adopt the identity and inject some fresh blood into the character. However, Moench was only interested if he could



"Marlene is not just his love but his grounding in reality; she's the one with common sense, the one who gives him encouragement, making sure these other identities are nothing but means to achieve his end and he's not schizophrenic."

find a plausible way of bringing Spector back from the dead, which he hopes he has accomplished.

At the same time, he has tried to return Moon Knight to the hero he was in the first series. Any gold bracelets that were added to his costume have disappeared along with any indication of superhuman strength. Instead, his fighting prowess and weaponry will be emphasized. Readers can expect to see the old, familiar crescent stars, glider cape, helicopter with ladder, and truncheon, which will have various purposes. With Grant Mansion serving as home base, the high tech Spector Corp. will be dissolved with all the money transferred to one of Moon Knight's other aliases, Steven Grant. Yes, Spector will go back to his trademark of adopting multiple identities, which were discarded in the last series, to achieve his goals. Besides becoming Moon Knight, Spector created financier Steven Grant as a means of "laundering" his accumulated illegal mercenary wealth. Ashamed of his past, Spector assumes the Grant personality to bury those memories and use the money for good. Then there is cabbie Jake Lockley, who has the street contacts in New York. Moench said he wanted someone who would have his ear to the ground, who could roam the bad neighborhoods freely and associate with the corrupt underworld or upscale rich. Who could maneuver all that better than a cabbie?

"They (Spector, Frenchie and Marlene) go back to Grant Mansion and it's not just Moon Knight who has been resurrected but cabbie Jake Lockley and millionaire Steven Grant. He decides to use Marc Spector, who he really is, but sparingly, only for contacts with intelligence or if he needs the skills of a mercenary."

Frenchie and Marlene, who have shared Spector's triumphs and tragedies, will also return along with a slew of other supporting cast members. Frenchie, Spector's former mercenary comrade, will resume his role as the tough helicopter-driving sidekick while Marlene will have a larger role in the grand scheme of things. Since issue #1, when Marlene's father was slaughtered by Bushman, she's been along for the bumpy roller coaster ride. Preferring to call him Steven, the tough-as-nails scrapper knows Moon Knight's secret identity and has become involved in both aspects of his life. Despite some brief separations, the two have shared a star-crossed romance and with Moon Knight's enigmatic death and return, now more than ever he will need her. "Marlene is not just his love but his grounding in reality; she's the one with common sense, the one who gives him encouragement, making sure these other identities are nothing but means to achieve his end and he's not schizophrenic," says Moench.

Tommy Lee Edwards will be penciling the four-issue limited series and if the San Diego preview was any indication, fans can expect the same high quality Gothic art style the first series delivered. "This stuff is dark, I guess, 'cause Doug's story is very pulpy to me. It reminds me a lot of an old radio show from the '30s. You've got all this mystical adventurous subject matter. You've got this archaeological dig and evil statue, plus scenes in a graveyard and a dark museum and scenes with a werewolf. This is fun and great stuff!"

Moench agrees and says, if anything, MOON KNIGHT will provide "a good mystery, a lot of action, the best of the classic villains and perhaps more supernatural elements than used to be in MOON KNIGHT. What more could you want?"

Ummm.... how about an ongoing series? So expect the unexpected as Moon Knight returns this fall with a vengeance! You've been warned!

THEY CALL HIM BOUNCING BILLY WILD BERRY.
TO BILLY, YOUR TONGUE IS NOTHING
BUT A BIG, PINK TRAMPOLINE.

NEW & IMPROVED

ANY OTHER TAFFY IS JUST PLAIN LAME.

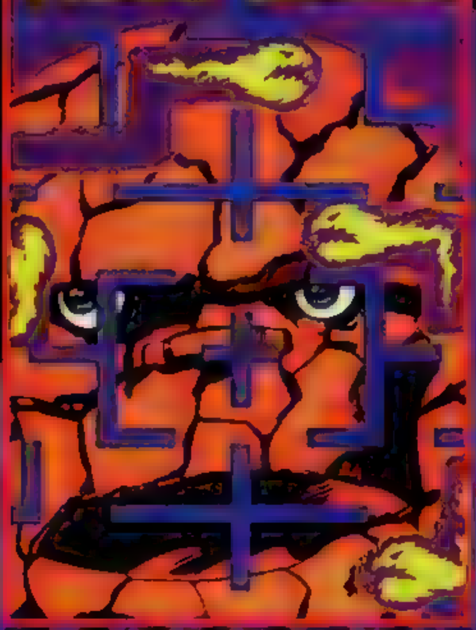
MARVEL'S

SILLIEST MOMENTS

by Barry Dutter

VIDEO WARS!

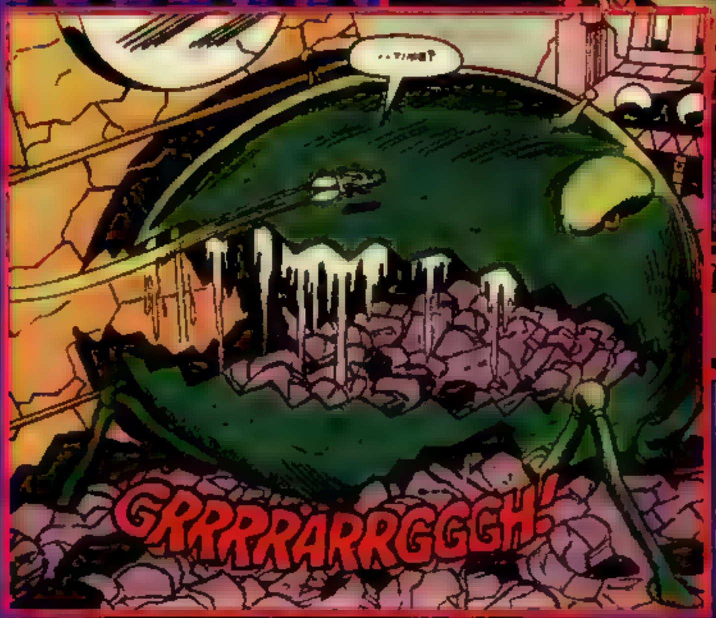
LEADER OF THE PAC, MAN!



The ever-lovin', blue-eyed Thing vs. Pac-Man? Couldn't happen, you say? Well, hold on to your power pellets, True Believer, as we explain how it almost did! It happened in the pages of MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #98, back in April, 1983, at the height of video game and Pac Man Fever! The story began with the Thing accompanying Franklin Richards to a video arcade. Ben learned that Franklin possessed an almost superhuman ability to master the computerized patterns in video games. (Actually, we think all kids possess this ability—that would explain why our nieces and nephews always kick our butts at Mortal Kombat!)

On their way back to the Baxter Building, Benjy and Franklin met Dr. Giles Niven, a man who had invented a new video game he called "Space Saver," based on mysterious signals he was picking up from "an unexplored sector of the galaxy"! The game involved the player running around a maze, trying to avoid a chomping creature called the Grungy Gobbler! (Any resemblance to a certain Japanese game, also called "Eat-Man," was purely coincidental, we're sure!) The Thing tried playing a round of "Space Saver," only to find himself, along with Ben and Dr. Giles, transported to an alien world called K'Rith!

It seems the space signals Dr. Giles was picking up on his monitors were actually radio waves from this alien world, which was being menaced by a real-life Grungy Gobbler! (We're surprised the world wasn't called "A'Tari!") In actuality, the Gobbler was an energy creature which lived to devour everything in its path! It came from the planet Gh'Runji, natch! The K'Rithians had transported Benjy and company to their world because of Ben's awesome video game playing ability—they believed him to



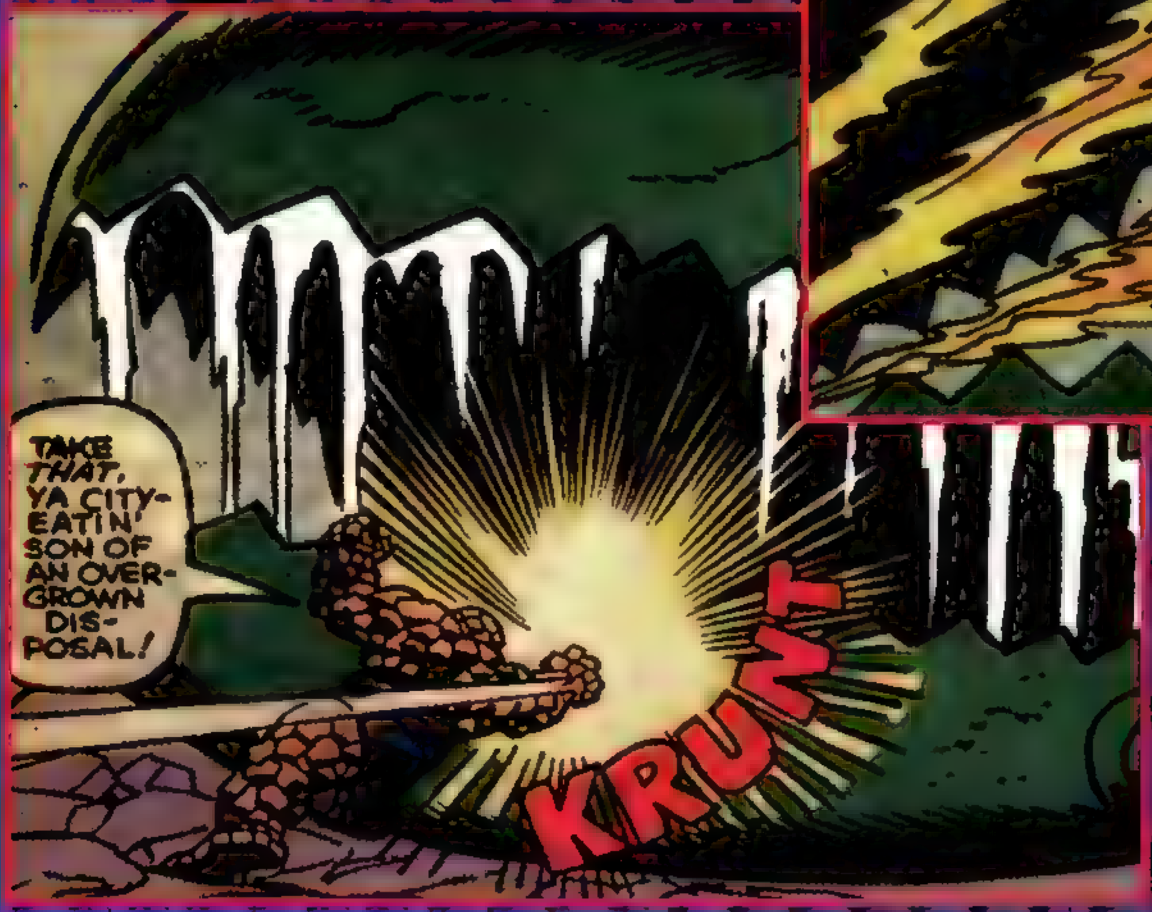
be a mighty hero known as the Space Saver!

(Though this plot sounds a lot like the movie THE LAST STARFIGHTER, it actually came out a year before that sci-fi flick! Honest!)

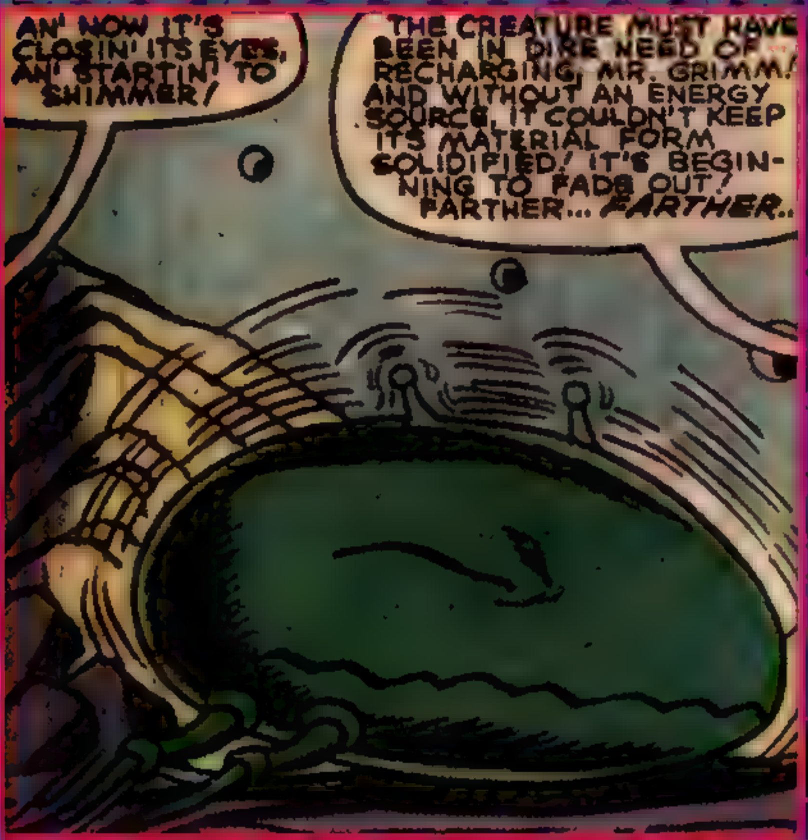
The Thing tried to protect the alien city from the Grungy Gobbler, but G.G. spit out some Gobble Drones to chomp on ol' Benjy! (Any

resemblance to Inky, Blinky, Stinky, and Clyde were purely coincidental, we're sure!) Fortunately, the Thing was able to outmaneuver the Gobble Drones, and then tried a frontal assault on the head Gobbler himself. His battle cry: "Take THAT, ya city-eatin' son of an over-grown disposal!" (Somehow, it doesn't have quite the same ring to it as "It's Clobberin' Time!")

Just then, Franklin Richards came to the rescue! It seems all those quarters Franklin had spent in the video arcade had actually paid off! Franklin realized that the Grunge Gobbler always returned to his power source! Our heroes destroyed the power source, thus causing that nasty green Gobbler to fade out of existence like a dead Space Invader!



Doc Giles decided to stay on the alien world and hang out with ten-foot-tall, green-skinned babes who lived there! (He was probably getting some ideas for his next video game!) Benjy and Franklin headed back to Earth, where "Space Saver" went on to become a very successful game. But Ben was no longer interested in playing! Ben commented, "I think maybe from now on—I'd better just stick to CHECKERS!"



Actually, we think Ben got off easy! He's just lucky he never had to face Ms. Pac-Man! She would have chewed him up and spit him out!

So the next time your parents give you a hard time about spending too much time down at the arcade, just tell them those video-game-playing skills of yours could someday help save the world! Some world! Any world!

Ah, forget it!

GAME OVER, MAN!

NIGHTCRAWLER

"I have been one acquainted with the night." — Robert Frost

Nightcrawler, a word most oft associated with large earthworms which one digs for in the middle of the night. The term itself conjures up images of all of the creepy-crawly "things that go bump in the night." It is the stuff of horror. And when you find yourself gazing into the yellowy eyes of one Kurt Wagner, a man whose flesh is covered in a dark velvety fur, his canine teeth jutting out in a vampiric fashion, his ears coming to a devilish point, and his tail most certainly fitting with what one would expect from a demon, the term Nightcrawler does seem to fit. But that, of course, would only apply if one subscribed to the notion that appearances are the sole judge of a man.

Much of Kurt's early history had been a mystery... even to himself. The largest piece of information which had been previously missing was the identity of his parents. The maternal side of this question has recently been answered in the form of X-Factor's infamous blue-hued metamorph, Mystique

BEAST FILES

[See File: Mystique]. All that is known of his father, Eric Wagner, is that he was a German Baron who died under mysterious circumstances. A few months after his death, Mystique gave birth to a son, Nightcrawler. Most mutants don't develop their powers and abilities until adolescence. Unfortunately for Kurt, his demonic appearance was apparent at birth. The superstitious townspeople heard quickly of the devilish child and struck out at Mystique, causing her to revert to her true form as well. Utilizing the shock she instilled in her attackers, Mystique fled with the infant Nightcrawler, only to have to revert to another form and sacrifice him to save herself, by throwing him over a cliff into the raging waters below.

Miraculously, Nightcrawler survived the fall as well as certain drowning. Sometime later he was found by the Gypsy sorceress Margali Szardos. He was raised in the circus alongside Margali's own children, Jemain [See File: Daytripper/Amanda Sefton] and Stefan. Trained from his early childhood to be an aerial acrobat on the trapeze, Kurt's unnatural physical characteristics made him ideal for the rigors involved. Before long, he took his place as the star of the air, until one fateful day when Jemain suffered what would surely have been a fatal fall. In that instant Kurt's mutant power of teleportation activated, and using it, he saved her life.

This brought him to the attention of a Texas circus owner who wanted Kurt as a star in his freak show. Having no desire to play the freak for any man, Kurt struck out on his own. Disaster followed tragedy as he witnessed his "brother" Stefan killing multiple innocent children in an attempt to exorcise the demons from them. The two battled desperately, until Kurt accidentally crushed Stefan's skull, thus honoring a pact to kill his brother if Stefan's sanity should ever slip.

However, Kurt was quickly discovered by the townspeople who chased him through the streets, willing to destroy their own town in order to slay the demon they perceived as the cause of the carnage.

It was at this fateful point that Xavier [See File: Professor X] stepped into Kurt's life and forever changed it. Using his mental powers to stun the crowd, Xavier saved Nightcrawler from having a stake driven through his heart. Kurt was the first recruit of his "New" X-Men assembled to rescue the original team from the living island Krakoa.

From that day and years following, Nightcrawler was a cornerstone member of the X-Men, and fought unwaveringly alongside the team until he was badly injured in a battle with the Marauders [See Files: Henchmen, Mister Sinister] in the Morlock Tunnels [See Appendix: Morlocks]. Recovering from these injuries, Nightcrawler learned of the "death" of the X-Men in a battle in Dallas. Circumstances, however, quickly conspired to create the formation of a new team of superhumans built on the principles of the X-Men known as Excalibur. As one of the founding members, Nightcrawler has remained with the team to this day, serving through most of the team's existence as their leader.

If one judges the proverbial book by its cover, they would indeed be missing out on this treasure of a man. Sadly, that can be the case for most. But for those who dare to peer deeper into the heart of this swashbuckling mutant acrobat, they will find a man of such depth, conviction, and warmth that they would see an angel where once a demon stood.

<<NOTES>>

Nightcrawler is a second generation mutant. As has been demonstrated by most mutants born of mutant parentage, his powers are much more diverse than the usual single-thread mutation. The first and most obvious example of his powers is that of his physical characteristics. He has on each of his hands only two fingers with an opposable thumb, while his feet have two forward toes and a thumb-like digit on the heel of each foot. His canine teeth are very prominent, almost vampiric in form, and he has a prehensile tail with a devilish point to it. This tail is a most astonishing formation as it has been seen to not only be capable of grasping items, but also capable of performing complex tasks such as the ability to duel an opponent effectively with a rapier. It has also proven strong enough and capable of gripping tight enough to support his weight or the weight of another.

The rest of his complex nature seems to revolve around darkness and has been shown to possess a link to the Darkforce dimension [See Files: Cloak, Darkstar. See Appendix: Dimensions]. His eyes are of a full yellow hue and devoid of a pupil. This has been proven to provide him with the capacity to see in near complete darkness. Mother Nature also saw fit to coat his entire body with a layer of blue, almost indigo, fur not unlike myself. His fur, however, unlike mine, seems to radiate an aura which extends into the Darkforce dimension, thus causing him to become translucent while creeping through the shadows. Then there is the strange ability to adhere to practically any surface. In some manner, Nightcrawler is capable of walking along any surface similar to Spider-Man. It is my personal theory that he utilizes the energies from the Darkforce dimension to create a void surrounding his epidermal region, thus causing an attraction between the molecules to such an extent that he can travel along them easily.

His final and most used ability is his line-of-sight teleportation. By traveling through the Darkforce dimension, Kurt is able to seemingly traverse any distance instantaneously. The primary limitation to this seems to be that if he is unable to see where exactly he is teleporting to he runs the risk of teleporting inside solid matter, which would have a devastating and quite likely fatal reaction. Each teleportation is heralded by a loud sound affectionately referred to as a BAMF as well as the pungent odor of brimstone and smoke. The trip itself can be quite disconcerting as any matter traveling through the Darkforce dimension is slightly displaced. By taking a foe through a rapid succession of teleports, Kurt can easily stun them into unconsciousness.

<<END FILE>>

THIRTY MINUTES WITH... J.M. DEMATTEIS

J.M. DeMatteis should be well known to most comic readers. As a writer, his work has been viewed as both creative and exciting. He's very popular for his stories which encompass a spiritual or mystical theme. His current work for Marvel can be found in the pages of SILVER SURFER, The DAYDREAMERS limited series, the upcoming MAN-THING series, and most notably SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN. J.M. loves the comic book business and has solid opinions on the future of the medium. Dean Davis spoke with him recently about his career, as well as his thoughts and concerns on the industry.

BY DEAN DAVIS

DD: My research for this interview shows me that you've been writing professionally since the mid-seventies.

JMD: Yeah, I have been...The first thing I ever sold in my life was to Crazy Magazine, in 1976. I knew a guy in college named Warren Reese who was working for Marvel at the time and said, "Why don't you give them something?" We were in the same creative writing class so he knew my stuff. Crazy-style humor wasn't exactly my forte, but I gave it a whirl. I think it saw print more through the good graces of the editor, a man named Paul Laiken, not really through the quality of the work because I think what I gave them was simply atrocious.

After that I would periodically submit things through the submissions editors of various comic companies, but nothing seemed to come from it. In the meantime I began a career in rock and roll journalism. I was writing reviews for some smaller papers and eventually worked for Rolling Stone. In late '77, I sent some ideas to DC and got the usual reply of why they would never let me write Superman in a million years, but that Paul Levitz was looking at submissions for books like Weird War Tales and House of Mystery. These were titles that I had never even heard of, let alone read. Since you do whatever you can to break in, it was that day I decided to be a writer for Weird War Tales. I spent the next few months going back and forth through the mail with Paul as he would tear apart my submissions and criticize my typing. Believe it or not, I still have all those letters.

DD: It sounds like Paul Levitz helped you out quite a bit by giving you some on-the-job training. What were the highlights of his advice and was it the work you did for DC that opened the door at Marvel?

JMD: While I was doing stories at DC I finally got some submissions through to Jim Shooter who liked them a lot. Jim had a really great sense of story structure. He knew what a story really needed to work. He eventually got me to do some fill-ins at Marvel while my career at DC was starting to roll along. Probably the best education I got was when I sat down with Paul to start these Weird War Tales. They had a set format and formula. He told me, "These are the rules...no more than 5.5 panels a page and no more than 35 words a panel." Everything had to be very simple and very clear. For starting out in the business, it was a great way to learn structure and discipline. It was a very valuable experience for me.

You would start on a five page story, then your next job would be an eight page story and so on. You'd move your way up the ladder. Sort of like starting out in vaudeville and working your way up to the Palace. There's not a lot of stuff out there today for new writers to come along and learn the ropes. Now you get a fill-in and it's on something like Spider-Man.

DD: So I guess most of the time spent on your early scripts involved a lot of counting?

JMD: You got it (laughter)...I would actually sit there and count the words per panel. You almost had to structure it like poetry. What I've seen in my writing career over the years, with comic books, screenplays, articles, whatever, is that it's so important when you're starting out to learn the basics and play by the rules. A lot of people come into the business with grandiose ideas of what they want to do and then shoot themselves in the foot. One of the things that Paul said to me back in 1978, and it always stuck with me, is that you can't break the rules until you learn the rules.

DD: Now that your comic book career was gaining steam, did you still try to maintain a foothold in the world of rock and roll journalism?

JMD: What happened was that I wrote a review for a Grateful Dead album in Rolling Stone. At that time I was not very fond of the Dead. After the article was printed they sent me a package of mail that they received in response to my review. We all know how loyal Grateful Dead fans are; they're like Star Trek or comic fans. Anyway, it made me realize that I wrote this flippant review and it really affected people. It hurt their feelings and suddenly I wasn't interested in doing this anymore. I didn't want to be the guy that was criticizing, I wanted to be the guy that was creating. Then let other people criticize me...and Lord knows they have! (laughter)

DD: What was your first regular gig at Marvel?

JMD: I started on CONAN of all things. Howard Mackie loves to kid me because he can't imagine me on Conan, you know? In retrospect I look back and realize that I did the best that I could, but there's maybe one story out of a year's run that I can look at today without wanting to throw up.

I also worked on THE DEFENDERS for three years. I did CAPTAIN AMERICA with Mike Zeck for a couple of years and then with Paul Neary. Suddenly, there I was doing three or four monthly full-length books after working with these shorter formats at DC. I have to say...when I first started out I was a little bit swamped. But there's nothing greater for a writer than to be out there learning his craft and getting paid for it.

DD: How was it working with a premier artist like Mike Zeck?

JMD: As I recall, Zeck and I got off on the wrong foot. We were both always complaining about each other and then somewhere along the line we both clicked. Since then Mike has become one of my favorite collaborators over the years. We also worked on the two Kraven specials: Kraven's Last Hunt and Soul of the Hunter, and more recently Spider-Man: Redemption last year. Whatever the project is, if Mike is drawing it, I'll write it.

DD: You mentioned a couple of people before that were a big help to you early on. Is there anyone else that comes to mind?

JMD: The person who was perhaps most influential to me in the early days was Len Wein at DC. Len was the first guy who really looked at my work and believed in it, believed in me and my talent in a very deep way. He was very enthusiastic and kind of took a mentor role with me. I'll always be grateful to Len for that.

DD: Let's talk about the Webbed Wallcrawler. The Spider-Man titles have been getting some heavy "fan flak" over the past two years. When the main story was looped throughout all the books, did you find it difficult or restrictive in trying to create a quality piece every month?

JMD: When the books were all connected, there was a tighter editorial rein. You know, every month I was writing something like "Chapter 3". That's the main reason I left AMAZING SPIDER-MAN before. We'd have a lot of fun at the writers' meetings, but to go home and write "Chapter 3"...it was getting tough. It was like being trapped inside a box.

DD: Do you feel the "one story, multiple title" concept was why the clone story didn't gain full acceptance?

JMD: Here's the thing. Before the clone story, you'd hear some people complaining that Spider-Man was stagnant. When the clone story was going on you'd hear railing and complaints about that. You know..."Get it back to basics; get the old Spider-Man back." Then Marvel makes an effort to change it back and now they get complaints about that. (laughter) The bottom line is that you're going to get complaints about anything you do. The only thing that really concerns me is, are we doing good stories? During the clone thing we busted our humps to do good stories and we're doing good stories now. Everything has its ups and downs.

The problem with the clone story wasn't the story. The problem was that for reasons that were way out of the writer's control, the storyline got stretched out far longer than we ever intended it. We originally envisioned it as a tale that would be told in six months...a year at most. If that story was originally done in a shorter timeframe, I feel the reaction would have been much different. For all the talk about it, the sales went up incredibly with that storyline. When the sales began to fall, it had nothing to do with the story. It had to do with the fact that the market was falling across the board. Whatever sales fell during that time with Spider-Man, they fell proportionately with everything else in the market.

DD: How have things changed in a Spidey post-clone world?

JMD: Now we all get to go off and tell our own stories. Obviously, we have to pay attention to the continuity in the other Spidey titles. If there's an event in one book it has to be echoed in the others. Ralph Macchio, I have to say, has given us a lot of freedom to pursue what we want to pursue. He is the custodian of the character so he has the right to step in and say whether something flies or not. Overall, Ralph has given us the space to have fun.

DD: You just spoke of the market drop we've been experiencing in the business. Do you have any feelings on why it fell?

JMD: (Pause)...I haven't a clue. You know, I sit here and write my stories and I talk with other freelancers and we try and figure out what's going on in the market now and we haven't a clue. I don't think we ever really knew who half the people were buying the books and we still don't know. Whether things come bouncing back...I don't really know. The thing that I begin to suspect as time goes by is that maybe the general audience is shifting. It's not that comic books as a whole are in trouble, but that comic books in the form we're marketing them in needs to be changed. Maybe there's different formats we can explore. Instead of a twenty-two page story every month, maybe they should be released as huge trade paperbacks, less often. Maybe digests. Maybe the interest in CD-ROM and online comics is the wave of the future.

I think another problem is, and it's been for awhile, is that we're not bringing in any kids. From what I've heard the median age for a Marvel reader is about 18. If you look at DC they've got wonderful things like the Vertigo line for older readers, but what is there from any company to bring in an eight-year-old, a ten-year-old? Don't get me wrong, working

for Vertigo has been an important part of my career and writing those stories keeps me sane, but where are the titles targeted to the kids?

When I was young, that's who read comics. Not teenagers. Not adults who grew up with the medium. Kids. The readership was like zillions of ten-year-olds. I think the ten-year-olds nowadays are watching cartoons, surfing the internet, going to movies, and playing video games. My big fear is that the literacy level in the country is declining. I've always said comic books were the last bastion of the literate. When I was a kid I'd read comics, I'd read books, I'd read anything I could get my hands on. I wonder if kids just aren't that interested in reading. They'd rather be watching MTV or whatever. If the comics market doesn't get a new generation we're not going to have an audience at all. We're becoming more and more of a niche market.

At the other end of the spectrum, I feel we need to expand the parameters of what comic books are. Do more things like Vertigo and Paradox. In the mid-eighties at Marvel we did MOONSHADOW, which for me as a writer was the thing that really changed the way I wrote. In essence, it changed my career because it allowed me to step out of the super hero mindset and just write to the best of my ability. I did MOONSHADOW and BLOOD for Epic which could possibly be viewed as the model for the DC Vertigo line that came about later.

The whole super hero thing has become far too dominant and, at least at Marvel, you don't have much of anything else. There's an attempt now with the new horror titles to break through that a little bit. I'd love to see something like Epic happen again. I'd like to see new genres, new audiences cultivated. But I think real effort and real money has to go into these other genres if we're going to grow as a medium. In speaking for myself as a creator, the thing that has made me go on all these years is that I can do Spider-Man and I can do Moonshadow. I can do the Silver Surfer and I can do Seekers. The fact that I can do both, and still keep the stories personal, has kept my enthusiasm up. If I was just doing nothing but super heroes I'd probably would have left comics by now.

DD: Now that you brought it up, you have written a wide array of characters. Is there anyone in particular who you would like to write?

JMD: One of the great things about doing Silver Surfer is that he is one of the last heroes that I really have a passion for that I hadn't done yet. It's still really new and I'm having a great time on the title. The key for me is to find these characters that get the twelve-year-old in my soul all excited again. Surfer is definitely one of those characters. Doctor Strange was another one. I'd love to do Doctor Strange.

DD: Do you ever get a chance to have the characters you write in separate titles meet up with each other?

JMD: Well, Spider-Man has shown up in a couple of issues of SURFER. It's more or less a supporting cameo. It doesn't affect the story in any great way. It'd be fun to do a big Spider-Man/Surfer crossover. Marvel has always been aware of the fact that these characters need to intersect. One of the things that made Marvel was the fact that it was a coherent, consistent universe where characters met and interacted, but a possible problem with crossovers is that sometimes it happens too much. A character might get hot and soon after he guest-stars in every single book every single month. If it's done in moderation it helps all the books.

DD: I read an interview you did a few years ago. In it you had a really killer quote where you stated, "I don't consider myself a comic book writer; I'm a writer who does comic books." What other forms of entertainment have you and your word processor churned out?

JMD: In the past I wrote some television episodes of the Twilight Zone when they revived it in the eighties. I also did five episodes for the Superboy series as well as some animation work. Last year I wrote an animated feature for Disney...which is currently languishing in development limbo.

Right now I'm finishing up a screenplay that's based on one of my original ideas. It's a very character-driven, Earth-based science fiction story—sort of like "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" meets "It's a Wonderful Life" — called "Straight On Till Morning" that I'm doing for Chris Columbus and Twentieth Century Fox. We're in the third draft right now and I'm extremely happy with the direction we're headed. It looks like I have another screenplay scheduled after we finish this one. The screenplays seem to be picking up speed for me now and I'm quite excited about it.

Something else that I'm also proud of is a rock CD I just completed titled "How Many Lifetimes?" It consists of original songs that I composed and I guess you can say it's spiritual rock in the tradition of Pete Townshend and George Harrison. It's $15.95 and is available from Creation Point Media at Box 3184, Kingston, NY 12401. I look at this project as my shot at Abbey Road. (laughter)

DD: Hey, I'm about out of tape and since I don't know shorthand maybe we should wrap this up. Thanks for giving me the time to ask you these questions. I enjoyed our conversation.

JMD: No, thank you...it was a pleasure. I'll talk to you soon.

Starring

SUZANNE GAFFNEY BEASON

Reported by Lysa Hawkins

Suzanne Gaffney Beason didn't grow up reading comic books. The comics in her home belonged to her brother and therefore were considered "hands off." She realized way back then that they were a special commodity, but it wasn't until 1986, when a strange twist of fate caused her to land a job at Marvel Comics, that she understood just where her brother was coming from.

Since that time, Suzanne has passed through production, soared into editorial and now, as Marvel's first Online comics editor, she's in cyberspace!

(LH) Why did you choose Marvel?

(SGB) I went to school for printmaking and was working in a printmaking studio, and a friend I worked with had a friend who worked for Marvel Books (a division which no longer exists). They [Marvel Books] needed some freelancers to come in and glue new Xerox covers onto last year's coloring book so retailers could see what they'd look like.

(LH) How soon after leaving Marvel Books did you go into editorial?

(SGB) They closed the Marvel Books division a year later. I learned that Tom DeFalco (Former Editor in Chief) needed an assistant/secretary, so I went for that job, which was a riot. I was interviewed by Mark Gruenwald and Tom DeFalco on Red Jumpsuit Day.

(LH) Red Jumpsuit Day?

(SGB) I don't know who originated it or how it came to be (Mike Carlin and Mark Gruenwald were responsible), but the editorial staff was supposed to wear these red jumpsuits that made them look like gas station attendants. So there I was, at this interview with two people who were not prepared to do an interview, wearing red jumpsuits. I thought to myself, yeah, I think I could work here.

(LH) What was it like working as an editor on the X-Men books?

(SGB) Well, it was all kind of a sink-or-swim learning experience. At the time I became Bob Harras' assistant, I hadn't read the X-books, so I spent my spare time reading up on continuity. It was surprising how quickly I got into it. It's exciting once you get a few books under your belt, and then you read something that refers to something you've already read. Before you know it, you start hearing characters' voices in your head, which is critical for script editing. Script editing is a lot tougher than I ever thought. Soon, you begin to take the characters personally...you build up a respect for them.

(LH) What book did you enjoy working on the most?

(SGB) As an assistant I liked X-MEN because it was such a front running/cutting edge book. As an editor, probably EXCALIBUR was my favorite because it was in my hands to determine its future. I got to work with many talented people like Warren Ellis and Carlos Pacheco. I also like the limited series format with that solid feeling of a beginning, middle and an end.

(LH) So now you're working on Marvel Online. Tell me about that.

(SGB) This is Marvel's first foray into the cyberworld. I'm working primarily on the Spider-Man Cyber-comic at the moment and having a blast. Every two weeks, eight new pages go up! I think the best part of this is that everything you see Online is written current in Marvel continuity, so the stories matter. There are four parts to each 32-page story. We've just hooked up with the Web as well as AOL so everybody can find us either at Marvel on AOL or "marvel.com" on the Web.

(LH) What else will Marvel Online feature?

(SGB) I'm hoping to do the Limited Series Channel, which would introduce the cyber audience to a wide range of the Marvel Universe they may not be familiar with. Also, we've never seen many of these characters move, or have sound attached to them. Marvel Online has other features like Cyber trading cards, trivia, games and different activities that are linked in with the comics.

(LH) It sounds like a completely different job editing for Marvel Online than for Marvel Comics.

(SGB) In a lot of ways it is. It's still editing and it's still Marvel characters, but there is also the computer aspect.

(LH) Do you think it's harder for a woman to climb up the ladder in a predominantly male field such as comics?

(SGB) There's a question for you. Anything that I say I think could be said for any field, certainty not just comics. I think there are more subtle steps on the ladder. Maybe it's a different ladder altogether. There can be different expectations.

(LH) Any tips for those dreaming of a life in comics?

(SGB) I would tell anyone who wants to get anywhere, to work really hard, don't expect to be given anything, and keep at it. Learn your craft and have respect for what it is you're trying to accomplish.

It's to a human what headlights are to a deer.

FINAL FANTASY VII

SQUARESOFT

PlayStation

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION™

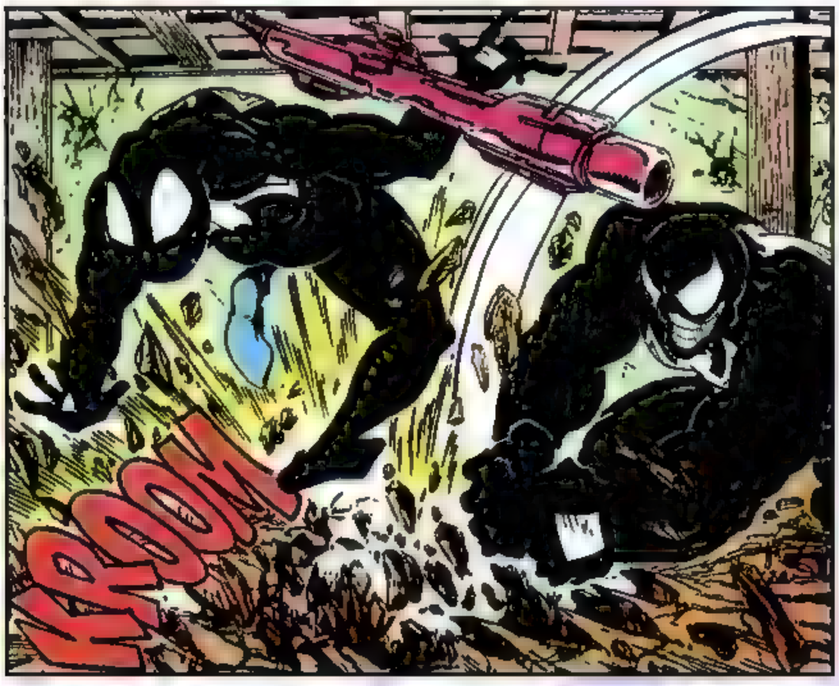
SPIDER-MAN VERSUS VENOM

He's the kinda guy you want to take home to meet mother. As a matter of fact, in the past, he's even charmed sweet old Aunt May. He knows what he wants and once he sets his mind on something, watch out! Runaway train! Ruggedly handsome, built like a tank, resourceful and currently a secret agent to boot, the man has a definite sense of what's right and wrong. Too bad those perceptions are as twisted as a pretzel.

With a ruthlessness on a par with Sabretooth, he's not afraid to take on anyone, whether friend or foe. And if you tick him off, you can kiss the whole breathing thing goodbye. Sounds perfect for an elite member of a suicidal squad section of the government. So why don't they want him anymore? Well, because his name is Venom, as in Spider-Man's deadliest enemy, and he's just plain PSYCHO! But the symbiote-alien-sporting-villain better wipe that evil cheshire grin off his face because beginning this September in VENOM: FINALE, a three-issue limited series by Larry "WOLVERINE" Hama and Mark "SUPREME" Pajarillo, his days are numbered!

"It's the resolution of the Venom/Spider-Man conflict," promises Hama. "Venom won't exist after this. That's what we mean by the finale."

What, no more tongue lashings from our obsidian frighthouse? How's that possible? Venom has gone head to head with Spider-Man, Daredevil, the Avengers, Quasar, the Black Cat, the Human Torch, and a



slew of other do-gooders. What happens this time that is so different?

"Essentially, he's been recruited into this black ops agency as a way out from the death sentence he was under," explains editor Tom Brevoort. "The OverReach Committee has come to realize that Venom is too much of a loose cannon to be doing this stuff. Even for the stuff they are engaged in, he's too dangerous, too uncontrollable, so they figure they'll put him on ice and things go from there."

For readers born in a galaxy far, far away, Venom started out as The Daily Globe's star reporter Eddie Brock. During the Sin-Eater's rampage, Brock wrote an exclusive on the killer's identity, claiming it was Emil Gregg who had confessed to the crimes. During a battle royale, Spider-Man and Daredevil discovered in actuality it was Stan Carter. As a result, Brock was humiliated and shunned by his profession for having reported false information. For him, his life was over until he bonded with an alien symbiote outfit that Spider-Man had brought back from the Beyonder-created planet. Endowed with even greater powers than the webslinger, he dubbed himself Venom and had only one agenda: to kill Spider-Man for ruining his life. The two have slugged it out numerous times but reached a truce when Spidey saved Venom's ex-wife. However, the agreement was soon terminated and these adversaries have been at each other's throats every time they've bumped into one another since. Recently, the Lethal Protector has been playing on the side of the angels as a secret agent but Brevoort remarks he's always been a villain, just one in sheep's clothing.

"Venom is a hero in his own mind," stresses Brevoort. "He believes he's the only force actively working for what's right, what's just and everything else is just an impediment or an obstacle. He's completely nuts but that's his outlook. To him getting this job was a complete exoneration of everything he believed. 'See, I was a hero all along, I've been screaming at the top of my lungs and Spidey and everyone was jealous of me.'"

It all finally hits the fan when instead of severing all ties with this maniacal menace, the OverReach Committee decides he is too dangerous to be walking around with all this knowledge of their activities. As a precautionary measure when they first recruited him, Venom had a thermite bomb implanted in his chest which could be triggered by a touch of a button. On his last mission, Venom messed up so badly, they have secluded him underground in a cell especially designed for him. In the first issue of the limited series, KABOOM, major chest pains for Venom as the bomb explodes. Bye-bye Venom. Surely after that, not even all the king's horses and all the king's men will be able to put poor Brock and the alien costume back together again. Sigh. The Committee should have known it wouldn't be that easy.

"Venom has been wondering how to escape and realizes gee, I have a thermite bomb in me and all I have to do is get it out," reveals Hama. "So he operates on himself, cuts himself open and pulls out this dripping bomb which is still connected to him."

Unfortunately for our villainous friend, there's an anti-tampering device on it which he holds in place with his tendrils. Once positioned on the door and Venom is on the other side of the room, he can proceed to let go and say hasta la vista to his cell door. But before he's a safe distance away, the Committee pushes the button and it blows the lock instead of Venom. From there on, he is the fugitive.

As it turns out, this installation is underneath Rockefeller Center and using the ventilation system, he pops up through a manhole and finds himself smack in the

middle of the Latverian American Day Parade. The Beast's reporter girlfriend, Trish Tilby, is there covering the event which is how Peter Parker discovers Venom is on the prowl. In the meantime, a self-proclaimed super hero by the name of Stentor shows up to deal with the looming threat. With a suit designed to amplify his voice to an incredible level and knowing Venom's delicate ears when it comes to sounds, this should be a snap. However, Venom does what he does best and Stentor may require more than a lube job by the end. He may need a bodybag.

"It ends up Venom is at large, very publically, on the run, in Manhattan, taking on all comers, and all comers will include Spider-Man, the police and the army. It will be an escalation of carnage," reports Brevoort. "It's a good thing for Venom all the other heroes are presumed dead or they would be showing up for this."

One thing you can expect is the ultimate knock 'em, sock 'em, no-holds-barred fight between Venom and Spider-Man. You better believe there will be no ear biting here! Instead, Hama has something planned which in his opinion is long overdue. "Every time Spidey has defeated Venom it's been through some stupid trick. It's been set up that way so Spider-Man can't beat Venom and I don't think it's true. I think with his powers, resources and experience, he could beat him. No tricks. Just tooth, fang and webbing."

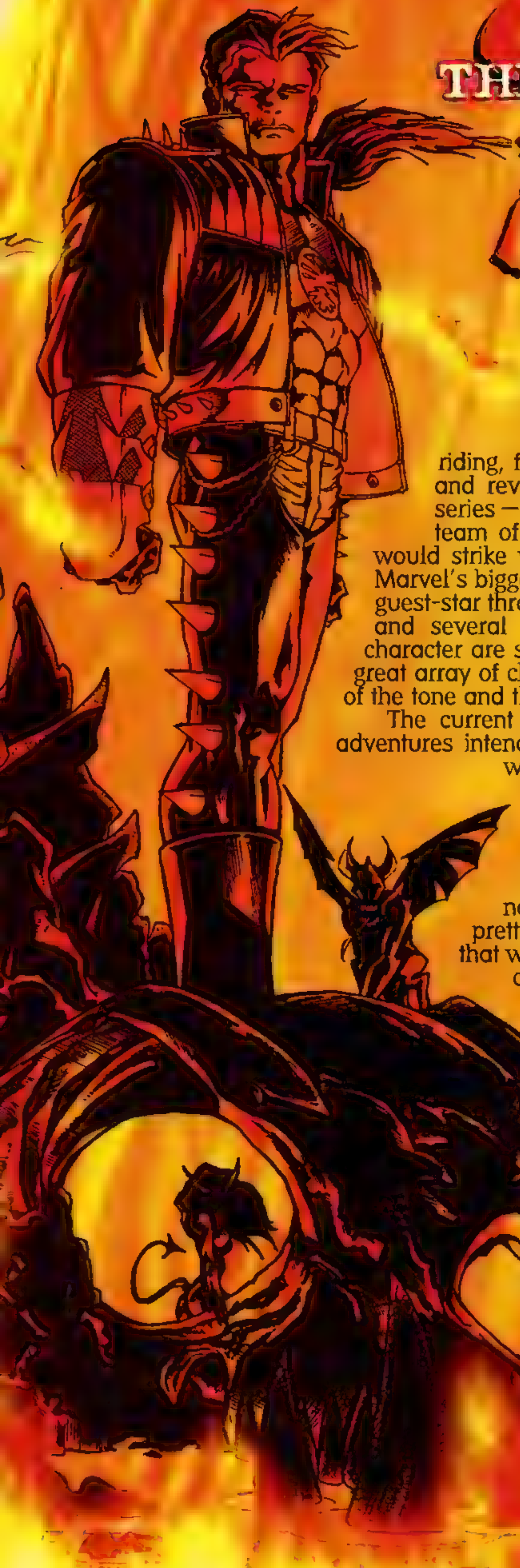
The end results may surprise collectors as this limited series also marks the last one with Venom as the lead character. For Brevoort, the difficulty with Venom-related projects has been in expanding on a villain who should have remained true to his dark nature. "At one point, when he was created, Venom was a very straightforward, very simple character," he says. "He was almost a flat character in that he had one motivation: I want to beat up Spidey and kill him. His motivation was so simple in one storyline, thinking he had accomplished this, he decides to stay on a desert island for the rest of his life. That's a fine enough character to be a Spidey villain but not to be a protagonist of a comic book because every issue would be Venom picking his teeth on a desert island and eating coconuts."

So this is it. The last swan song. The curtain falls here. But for fans panic stricken that their favorite white-eyed, jaw-clamping, drool-fest, tendril-spawning Venom is no more, just a simple reminder. Thanks to Spider-Man, Brock is once more imprisoned and his hatred for the wallcrawler now flows deeper than the River Styx. Revenge burns in his thoughts. There is no doubt we haven't seen the last of Brock. As for the alien symbiote, it was once thought dead but returned to create Venom. Even as you read this, it is probably slithering through the city, seeking out a new host. Any takers? This may be the finale, or it could be the beginning of something much, much worse.

—Bryan Cairns

GHOST RIDER

THE FIRE STILL BURNS!



Back in 1990, Marvel launched a number of new comic book titles that were proclaimed the "heroes of the '90's." One of these new titles was GHOST RIDER, a revival of the 1970's motorcycle-riding, flaming-skull-headed horror character with a few twists and revisions. Marvel had no clue what collective chord this series — cobbled together by the then relatively unknown creative team of Howard Mackie, Javier Saltares, and Mark Texeira — would strike with fandom assembled. GHOST RIDER #1 was one of Marvel's biggest sales blockbusters, and the character was a frequent guest-star throughout the Marvel Universe. Now, 90-some odd issues and several creative team changes later, the magazine and the character are still chugging along — though both have gone through a great array of changes that have brought GHOST RIDER pretty far afield of the tone and themes it began with.

The current team responsible for bringing you Ghostie's monthly adventures intends to bring things back to basics. Editor Tom Brevoort, writer Ivan Velez, Jr. and returning art team Javier and Tex have started moving the storyline in GHOST RIDER toward more intense, horror-oriented areas. Velez remembers his first experiences as a reader of the 1970s GR: "I was a real fan of the '70s GHOST RIDER book, with that great Mike Ploog artwork. As a kid, I'd never seen Satan so much in a comic! I thought that was pretty cool, being a fan of the Eerie and Warren horror titles that were so intense. Those issues were the closest things to EC comics for the kids. I also liked that Ghost Rider was the first truly ugly super hero. Let's face it, even the Thing from the Fantastic Four has this kind of cute and cuddly thing going, despite his monstrous appearance. Ghost Rider was really the face of death! And it's that aspect I want to emphasize in the stories I'm doing." Tom Brevoort puts it more succinctly: "I've always seen GHOST RIDER as a supernatural urban western. Ghost Rider is like the High Plains Drifter, or any of those Sergio Leone western heroes — just this big, iconic presence. I think it's time for the series to come back to those core elements."

Brevoort was presented a challenge when he inherited GR from previous editor James Felder. Having never had much of a history with the character, Tom nevertheless saw it as an opportunity. "I had to figure out what made him work, what played to his strengths. The previous regime on the book were doing some interesting experiments with the book, but maybe going too far from the basics. What we're doing now is getting back to what made GHOST RIDER work in the first two years... hard-edged stories, realistic artwork, and more focus on the Ghost Rider/Danny Ketch relationship."

The first steps toward this new direction were presented in GHOST RIDER MINUS 1, the story from "Flashbacks" month, which marked the return of original series artist Javier Saltares to the pages of the book he helped make a monster hit years ago. "I came to do the Flashback story, then they asked me to stay," Javier remembers. " I called Mark Texeira on a whim, and asked if he wanted to do the book with me again. He was doing some Vampirella stuff for Harris Comics at the time, but I've known Tex since junior high school, so he couldn't resist! His first issue is #92."

The four-part story that spins GHOST RIDER fully off in his new direction is called "Last Temptation," beginning in issue #90 and wrapping up in the double-sized epic #93. Ivan tells us, "It begins with Blackheart offering Ghost Rider a deal. A chance to be free of the void in exchange for services." In previous issues, readers found out that Ghost Rider is really the spirit of Noble Kale, whose soul was bargained away to the Devil by his father. But whatever happened to Noble Kale's original human body? Well, it turns out that Blackheart is in possession of it, and is using it as the ultimate bargaining chip. Blackheart is the son of Mephisto, the former ruler of the underworld, who died in the HEARTS OF DARKNESS one-shot several years ago. Since then, Blackheart has been running Hell and causing lots of headaches for Ghost Rider.

Now, according to Brevoort, Blackheart has decided to eclipse his father's accomplishments and unleash a whole new troop of Spirits of Vengeance on Earth. And who better to train and lead them than the original Spirit of Vengeance himself? "To sweeten the deal, Blackheart offers Kale not only his human body back, but also the hands in marriage of both his old love Pao Fu and Blackheart's 'sister' Black Rose. So by the end of #92, Ghost Rider is actually married — and where that's going, we can't say! However, Black Rose may well turn out to be someone near and dear to Ghost Rider, and someone readers have been asking about."

Other secrets are revealed over the course of "Last Temptation" as well. Ivan illuminates: "Blackheart and his sister could never touch Ghost Rider directly, and we find out why. We also learn how Danny Ketch's mother becomes instrumental in Ghost Rider's struggle to be free of Blackheart's influence. And then we learn why Ghost Rider is such an important player in Mephisto's overall scheme." The extra-sized finale of the storyline in issue #93 promises lots of status quo-altering events, though both writer and editor are playing them close to the vest. According to Tom, "It's the climactic final battle

between Ghost Rider and Blackheart... and Danny Ketch is finally separated from Ghost Rider... but that doesn't mean his life is necessarily going to get any better. Because we're just vicious, evil people!" Ivan is even more ominous: "After the end of 'Last Temptation,' Danny Ketch's role will be irrevocably altered — for better or for worse." The upshot of it all is that the character of Ghost Rider ends up taking on a whole new role in the Marvel Universe — a role involving judgment of good and evil that is much closer to his original portrayal in the series, but also giving him a distinct and logical place in the darker corners of the M.U.

Ivan and Tom intend to forge forward rather than deal with lots of old unresolved storylines — but that doesn't mean we won't be seeing some old mysteries wrapped up, and some old favorites among the villains and supporting cast dropping by. Tom likes to describe the dynamics coming up in the series as "a mixture of the old and new." Right on the heels of "Last Temptation," Tom informs us, Ghost Rider will finally embark on solving once and for all the mystery of John Blaze's missing children. But wait — didn't Blaze find his kids in the last issue of his own series a few years back? Ivan reveals, "The children we saw in that last issue of BLAZE are not who we think they are." Afterward, John Blaze will most likely stick around to play a major role in Ghost Rider's cast. "John Blaze may become a bigger part of Ghost Rider's world than he or anyone expects," Ivan teases.

Ghost Rider's more savage counterpart, Vengeance, will also be showing up, and Tom promises that "we'll be doing vicious things to him!" Ivan apparently warmed to the idea of doing something with the character after reading the painted limited series CODE OF HONOR, where some new character depth was added to Lieutenant Michael Badilino, Vengeance's human half. "That made him more interesting to me. We're planning to reveal exactly why Badilino became such a similar being to Ghost Rider."

And what about the rest of the supporting cast from the early days? "Well," Ivan chuckles, "we sent his (adopted) mother to a mental institution, and his sister's still dead, so they're out of the picture for a while!" However, some of the more recent additions to the cast will be further explored. Noble Kale's cousin Jennifer, the young sorceress, will be playing a role and may acquire a new love interest about whom Ivan is keeping very tight-lipped. The new Spirits of Vengeance introduced during "Last Temptation" are slated to be around in some capacity, and though plans are tentative, Tom expects that readers will see the return of a "really big villain" in issue #100. And even though a whole new status quo is established in issue #93, don't necessarily expect it to be set in stone. "Issue #100," he warns, "will probably flip the status quo around all over again."

One thing seems certain: the creative chemistry and mutual respect among the GHOST RIDER creative team is obvious and apparent. Tom describes the process of putting together the book as very synergistic: "Ivan and Javier talk to each other quite a bit, and that helps make it a good creative process. Ivan is always open to criticism and other ideas. Ivan writes from the characters out, meaning the stories come from what the characters are feeling and experiencing." Ivan says of working with Javier and Texeira, "It's like a dream. They're both just really, really good."

Probably the most enthusiastic about his role in the collaboration is Javier, who enjoys being able to throw his own input into the story direction. He also describes Ivan as "a writer who knows that to keep an artist happy, sometimes he should throw in some stuff that the artist likes to draw! I guess it's because Ivan also draws, himself. I bounce story ideas off of him all the time. There was one time when Ivan called me up and asked for input on how to end an issue!"

The synergy extends to the more visual aspects of the series as well. Javier, who designed the original look for the 1990's version of the Spirit of Vengeance, was itching to get back to something similar when he came back to do the book. "Ivan, Tom and I talked about changing the costume right away; the one he had, I thought, was too much of a super hero look. I always thought he should have been more of a horror character. That's really his realm. So now he's back with a dark and gritty look!" The Ghost Rider tearing through the pages of the series today is a character much closer to his visual roots, with a few modifications. " I gave him some leather chaps with spikes, because that's become kind of a biker thing. At some point, I'll probably change it a little more... or even do a total makeover. Who knows? Whatever it ends up, it should be real dark. We should let him be what he's supposed to be: the Biker from Hell."

Javier describes the overall experience as coming back to a much different book than the one it was when he started it — and lots of fun. "It's really getting back to the meat and potatoes of who and what Ghost Rider is." Ivan is very happy to be steering the book back in a more horror-oriented direction. "It's good, because I never thought he belonged fighting super-villains. He should be like an urban legend. In essence, he's the Boogeyman. It's good to get back to that." And how should the fans of GHOST RIDER, old and new, react to the radical new directions? "Hopefully," Tom Brevoort smiles, "for most of them, it'll feel like coming home."

Mark Bernardo--Still waiting for the return of the Orb

UPN'S SUNDAY MORNING
BACK TO BACK POWER PACK
KIDS
PAID ADVERTISEMENT
JUMANJI
THE INCREDIBLE HULK WITH SHE HULK
"All New"
Stay with us for
Sweet Valley High
& Breaker High
Starting at 10am
Watch for
ALL-NEW
EPISODES
at 9am.
UPN

Spotlighting the talented men and women who've pumped up the House of Ideas to immeasurable proportions, it's . . .

MARVEL'S UNSUNG HEROES

Janice Chiang

Occupation: Letterer (Currently: STAR TREK: EARLY VOYAGES)
First Appeared in the Marvel Universe: lettering DEATHLOK in 1975
Base of Operations: New York
Dual Identities: mother, bodybuilder, chef
Known Confidants: Calvin Louie (son), Danny Louie (husband), Renee Burger-Carter, Jon Babcock, Sue Crespi, Jack Morelli, Christie Scheele, Michele Wrightson, Joe & Hilarie Staton, Jeff Moran, Kathleen Doherty (friends and fellow letterers) & 28 West
Major Enemies: ignorance, intolerance, and tailgaters
Hero Status Verification: has been lettering Marvel Comics for 17 years.

Why lettering?
I sort of fell into it. I had a background in fine arts but needed a dependable job. A friend of mine named Larry Hama and his friend Ralph Reese were working together at Continuity Studios. At the time, Ralph handled the lettering and he was the one who showed me the ABC's of the job. From there I landed a spot in the Marvel Bullpen. Three months later, I quit the comics industry. Five years later the birth of my son brought me back.

What do you remember about your first assignment back after that leave of absence?
Back then we handled a lot of the original art since we lettered right on the boards. I was so nervous that I first penciled the letters and then inked over them. It took forever!

What books have you worked on?
ALPHA FLIGHT, CONAN THE BARBARIAN, MICRONAUTS, GHOST RIDER, WHAT IF?, BARBIE FASHION, QUASAR, SQUADRON SUPREME, PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL, POWER MAN AND IRON FIST, ROM, Nth MAN, and BLADE.

What was it like making the transition from hand lettering to working with a computer?
It was like riding a roller coaster with your hair on fire! I had bought a computer in '94 and didn't really touch it until '96. Fortunately, Jon Babcock was generous enough with his time and patience to teach me the basic programs that are used for computer lettering. At first it was very scary but now it's fun because I can do so many things with it. Also, most of the computer fonts originate with hand lettering samples so there's still a lot of control over what you're doing.

What qualities are most important for a letterer to possess?
You have to be good at interpreting the mood of the story. That affects the style of font you use to express what the characters are saying. The trick is to enhance the story and art without overwhelming it. Also, hand letterers need patience. It's very minute work. Most letters are less than 3/16 of an inch tall. It has to be very tight and concentrated. For that reason, your physical being affects your lettering. If you're tired or distracted it shows.

Which Marvel character's powers would you most like to have?
The first thing that pops into my head is Barbie because she's got all the right answers and nobody ever dies in her world (Laughs). But truthfully I'd like Professor X's telepathic abilities. That way, I could understand the world and the people in it better.

Outside of being a successful comic letterer, what life achievement are you most proud of?
My family life. I have a 17-year-old son who's a really decent individual so I feel I've contributed one for the good side. I've also been lucky enough to balance a home life with my hectic work hours. My husband, a graphic artist, helps run the household, so that if I have a deadline to meet I just scream out "Help! Feed me, clothe me, go on without me!" And they do.

If Hollywood was making a movie of your life, what genre would it fall under?
I think it'd have to be a documentary because I've traveled down so many paths I've never seen reflected anywhere else.

What has been your favorite experience at the House of Ideas?
What's really exciting is to be part of a talented team which creates a book that withstands time. A book whose art and storytelling continue to be as thought provoking as the first time it was read.

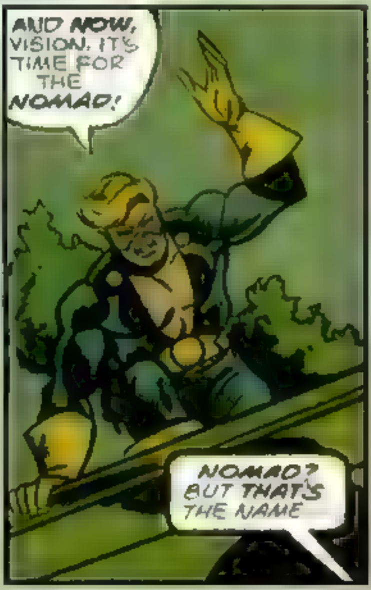
Who are your heroes?
My son because he has a willingness to discover new things. Also Jim Starlin and Larry Hama, because they continue to challenge themselves. Other than that, anyone who does good work and good deeds and doesn't broadcast it.

MARVEL CHRONICLES 20

1975 PART 2

CHURCHILL, COWBOYS & THE CELESTIAL MADONNA

Today readers are used to thinking of the X-Men "family" of books, with close-knit continuity among the individual titles. Back in 1975 writer Steve Englehart anticipated such a development by forging links between the stories in the various titles he was writing, including THE AVENGERS, CAPTAIN AMERICA, and DOCTOR STRANGE.



The central axis was clearly THE AVENGERS, which in 1975 had one of the most amazing years in its long history. Not only did Englehart tie the series in with his other books, but he also linked it to Marvel series lying far outside the super hero milieu. On top of that, he used THE AVENGERS to elaborate upon important aspects of Marvel history, reaching back thousands of years to the dawn of the Kree Empire. But most importantly, Englehart was telling stories and exploring characterizations that firmly established him as one of the finest of the AVENGERS' chroniclers.

He began the year by taking his ongoing "Celestial Madonna" epic in brand new and unexpected direction. In the 1974 issues Kang the Conqueror, the warlord from the future, had returned to the Avengers' time to find and capture the Celestial Madonna, the woman prophesied to become the mother of a being who would alter the fate of the cosmos. He learned that she was Mantis, the Vietnamese martial artist allied with the Avengers.

Kang was originally a time traveler who journeyed from the far future to ancient Egypt, where he became the tyrannical Pharaoh Rama-Tut. As Tut he subsequently traveled to the 40th century A.D. and became Kang, who menaces the Avengers in the present. Eventually Kang will tire of his life of conquest and expiate his crimes by returning to ancient Egypt and his Rama-Tut identity, but this time ruling benevolently.

This kindler, gentler Rama-Tut arrived in the Avengers' time and disrupted Kang's scheme. Kang then tried to kill Mantis, but his lethal blast was intercepted by the newly reformed Swordsman. Kang and Rama-Tut grappled with each other within Kang's timeship, accidentally activating it and vanished from the watching Avengers.

The Avengers traveled to Viet Nam in issue #130, where they buried the Swordsman in the gardens of the Priests of Pama, members of the alien Kree who had raised and trained Mantis. While there the Avengers ran into a new masked champion named Nomad, who was actually their old teammate Captain America!

In the previous year in the CAPTAIN AMERICA series, Englehart had Steve Rogers become disillusioned with the federal government after discovering a traitor in its ranks. Rogers assumed a new identity as Nomad, the man without a country. He was now battling the Serpent Squad, which had been revamped into a team of costumed terrorists by its new leader, the former Madame Hydra, now known as the Viper. She had joined forces with the renegade Atlantean warlord Krang to recover the Serpent Crown, an ancient mystical power object. The Squad abducted Hugh Jones, the head of the multinational corporation Roxxon Oil (in its first Marvel appearance), and used the Crown to enslave him mentally. Nomad succeeded in foiling the Viper's plans and freeing Jones. But Jones had sensed the power the Crown could give, and he wanted more, as we shall soon see.

Back in AVENGERS #131, Kang and Rama-Tut arrived in Limbo, a strange otherdimensional realm in which the laws of time function very differently. Limbo is ruled by Immortus, an enigmatic figure who, as Kang knew, had battled the Avengers himself early in their history. Immortus imprisoned Rama-Tut, and Kang used Immortus's own technology to assemble a

new team to battle the Avengers. Among the members of this Legion of the Unliving were Captain America's old enemy, Baron Heinrich Zemo (the father of the Zemo who now leads the Thunderbolts); Frankenstein's Monster; the original android Human Torch; and the Avengers' former ally, Wonder Man.

Kang turned on Immortus, imprisoning him, as well as Rama-Tut, and teleported Hawkeye, Iron Man, Mantis, Thor, and the Vision into the catacombs beneath Immortus's palace to face the Legion of the Unliving. But Kang could not maintain his mental control over his Legionnaires. Not only did the original Torch regain his free will, but in examining the Vision, he came to the conclusion that the Vision's android body was once that of the Torch himself!

Ultimately, Hawkeye succeeded in freeing both Rama-Tut and Immortus, while Thor attacked Kang, forcing him to retreat by teleporting himself elsewhere in time.

No doubt the Avengers, who believed Immortus was their enemy, were surprised he was now on their side, but a bigger shock was still to come. Rama-Tut may have guessed the truth before he himself departed to an unknown time and place. Then Immortus revealed to the Avengers that he was the future identity of the man they knew as both Kang and Rama-Tut!

Englehart's recurring theme in his stories is that of "the rising and advancing of a spirit" (indeed, that is the translation of his co-creation Shang-Chi's name). The evolution of a man from the murderous, power-hungry Kang to the serene, wise, and reclusive Immortus is one of Englehart's finest successes in dramatizing this idea.

Beginning in issue #133, the Avengers went back in time many thousands of years to witness the beginning of the recorded history of the alien Kree race again thanks to Immortus. Back then, they were merely a tribe of blue-skinned barbarians who shared the planet Hala with a peaceful race of sentient plants called the Cotati. Eventually the emperor of the alien Skrulls who at the time were pacifists and not conquerers, came to Hala. The Emperor offered to share the benefits of their advanced science with whichever of Hala's two sentient races proved itself worthier.

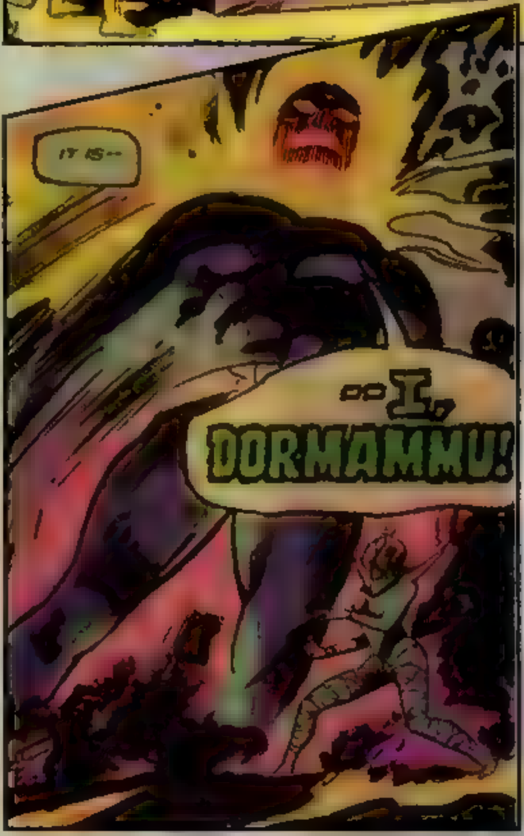
And so the Skrulls staged a test, sending seventeen members of each race to separate deserted worlds to create their offering. The party of Kree were sent to Earth's moon, where, using Skrull tools, they built a great city: this is what is now known as the Blue Area of the Moon, where Uatu the Watcher makes his home. But the party of Cotati were sent to another lifeless world, which they transformed into a garden of overwhelming beauty.

Fearing that the Skrulls would decide in their rivals' favor, the Kree massacred the Cotati. Appalled, the Emperor refused to deal any further with the Kree, so the Kree killed him as well as his party. The Kree used what they learned from the captured Skrull starship to become a technologically advanced race themselves and planned to conquer the entire universe. And thus began the enmity between the Kree and the Skrulls that persists to this day; moreover, the tale implies that the Skrulls became ruthless conquerors themselves in response to the threat posed by the Kree.

The Cotati, though, were not extinct: they had left behind seed pods which grew into a new generation of their race. They formed an alliance with a Kree pacifist movement, took Cotati with them as they spread through the cosmos. The two pacifist Kree who came to Earth planted Cotati in what is now Viet Nam. There the pacifist Kree became the ancestors of the Priests of Pama, who raised Mantis, knowing she was a possible candidate for the role of Celestial Madonna.

Abruptly, the time travels ended, and Thor, Iron Man, Hawkeye, and the Vision found themselves in the gardens of the Priests of Pama, face-to-face with—amazingly—the Swordsman, whose body now radiated a green glow. The Swordsman's corpse had been reanimated by the spirit of the eldest Cotati on Earth; it was he who was to become the mate of the Celestial Madonna.

But now yet another new element entered Englehart's ever-growing epic: a crossover with one of his other series, DOCTOR STRANGE. Strange's greatest enemy, the dread Dormammu, had apparently been destroyed at the end of the Avengers-Defenders War. But now, as revealed in DOCTOR STRANGE #6, he was being "reborn" deep within the Earth, and



had imprisoned the spirit of the Earth, known in later stories as Gaea (who would one day be revealed as the mother of Thor!). He had likewise captured the Scarlet Witch and her new tutor in sorcery, Agatha Harkness, the witch from FANTASTIC FOUR.

Englehart continued the storyline in DOCTOR STRANGE, where Dormammu soon achieved full power and gigantic size, towering over mortal humans as he strode down the Grand Canyon! Strange and Clea succeeded in besting him and his sister Umar, and in the process readers learned that Clea was actually Umar's daughter! But Clea did not yet know this, nor that the dread Dormammu was her uncle.

Subsequently, Englehart began a new storyline which pitted Strange once more against his rival Baron Mordo and plunged the sorcerer supreme into a series of hallucinatory realities, thanks to his old enemy Nightmare.

But let us return to THE AVENGERS and Viet Nam, where not one but three different Kangs simultaneously attacked the team, while a fourth one attempted to abduct Mantis. In fact, the four Kangs were the same one, who kept traveling to the same point in time to fight the Avengers. But once again Immortus thwarted his younger self.

And now, finally, all the plot threads came together. Immortus presided over a double wedding in GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #4. The Vision and the Scarlet Witch, having mastered true witchcraft, were now ready to be married. And Wanda's former rival for the Vision's love, Mantis, now accepted her role as the Celestial Madonna and wed the eldest of Earth's Cotati. As a kind of wedding gift, the Avengers belatedly inducted Mantis as a full member. The newlywed Mantis and Cotati transformed into pure energy and ascended into the heavens; we would not hear from them again for many years to come.

The Vision and the Witch took off for their honeymoon on the Polynesian island of Rurutu. Readers were no doubt taken aback to see the Vision show up on the beach in issue #137 wearing only a pair of swimming trunks. But it was yet another step in Englehart's character arc for him. Even in his second appearance in THE AVENGERS, Roy Thomas had already let the Vision weep. Steve Englehart had further humanized the android to the point that he could fall in love and marry. Eventually he would move the Vision and Witch out to the suburbs and make them into parents.

Meanwhile, the Avengers needed replacements for their newlyweds and the deceased Swordsman; oddly enough, they ended up advertising for new recruits on television. In response the newly furry Beast showed up in issue #137. Though this may surprise today's readers, back in 1975 it was a step up for the Beast to "graduate" from the X-Men to provisional membership in the Avengers. Moondragon, a failed candidate for the role of Celestial Madonna, became another provisional member, and in issue #141 Captain America returned to the Avengers.

Cap's resumption of his original costumed identity had not come about under happy circumstances. While Rogers had been operating as Nomad, a New York teenager named Roscoe took it upon himself to become the new Captain America. He was encouraged by the original Cap's frequent partner, the Falcon. But to take on the role of Captain America also means to take on his enemies, and the new Cap was brutally murdered by the Captain's eternal archenemy, the Red Skull.

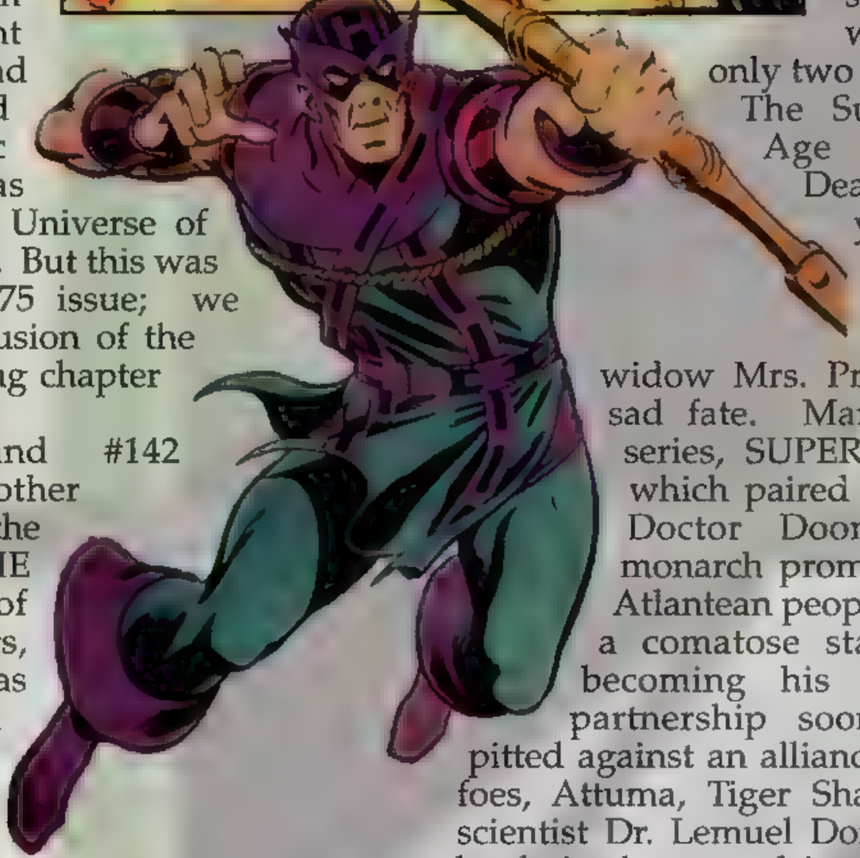
Horrified by Roscoe's death, Steve Rogers resumed his role as Captain America in issue #183 to hunt down the Skull. In these final issues of his run on the series, Englehart resurrected the Skull's trademark gimmick from the Golden Age: his theme music that he played whenever he killed a victim, Chopin's familiar Funeral March. One would not think that a musical theme would work in a silent, visual medium like comics, but if you can imagine the march, it works very well. Englehart also gave the Red Skull another gimmick: his "dust of death," which kills his victims, tightening and discoloring the skin on their heads until they resemble—red skulls!

Englehart used the Beast's presence in AVENGERS to continue plot threads he had left over from writing the character's recently cancelled series in AMAZING ADVENTURES. One of these concerned a mysterious redhaired woman who was tracking down the Beast. She turned out in issue #141 to be Patsy Walker Baxter, former heroine of Marvel's long-running teen book PATSY WALKER, whom Englehart had reintroduced into the Beast's series.

Coincidentally, the Avengers were just about to investigate Brand, and the Beast talked them into letting Patsy come along. Brand had recently become a subsidiary of the malevolent Roxxon Oil Corporation, which was headed by our old friend Hugh Jones, now a willing servant of the Serpent Crown. When the

Avengers arrived at Brand's Long Island plant, Jones and Baxter had five members of the Squadron Supreme, the super heroes of an alternate Earth, captured both them and Patsy, who was clearly on the outs with her husband.

Meanwhile, Thor and Moondragon had embarked on their own mission: Hawkeye had disappeared, and Thor quite rightly suspected Kang. Englehart was still not finished with him. Immortus and the two Avengers tracked Kang back to the Arizona of 1873. Readers who were surprised by Englehart bringing Patsy Walker into the super hero milieu now had a bigger surprise in store in issue #142. To stop Kang's new attempt to conquer the 19th century, Hawkeye had teamed up with Kid Colt, the Rawhide Kid, the Two-Gun Kid, the Ringo Kid, and the Phantom Rider, then known as the Night Rider. Englehart had thus established Marvel's classic Western heroes as living in the Marvel Universe of the super hero comics. But this was in the December, 1975 issue; we must leave the conclusion of the story for a forthcoming chapter of the Chronicles.



Issues #141 and #142 introduced yet another important figure into the world of THE AVENGERS; one of their finest artists, George Pérez, who has only recently returned to illustrate the new "Heroes Return" incarnation of the series.

Following Englehart's departure, 1975's final issue of CAPTAIN AMERICA, #192, brought back one of Cap's recurring foes, the sinister psychiatrist Doctor Faustus. Little noticed at the time was the debut that issue of Faustus's new assistant, a comely blonde named Dr. Karla Sofen, who would later become the second costumed criminal to be known as Moonstone, and who today serves in the Thunderbolts under the name of Meteorite.

The biggest news for Captain America fans in 1975, though, was the debut of a brand new series, THE INVADERS, set during World War II and reuniting Marvel's greatest Golden Age heroes: Captain America and his sidekick Bucky, the original Human Torch and his partner Toro, and Namor the Sub-Mariner. The writer and creator of the series was, of course, Marvel's foremost Golden Age fan, Roy Thomas, who teamed here with the great comic strip artist Frank Robbins.

The series debuted with GIANT-SIZE INVADERS #1, set right after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in which Cap and his allies first clashed with the Nazis' own superhuman champion, the original Master Man. Following their victory, the legendary British Prime Minister Winston Churchill proposed that the heroes continue to work together, invading enemy territory to battle the Axis powers on their home ground. The heroes agreed, and the regular INVADERS series chronicling their wartime exploits began only two months later.

The Sub-Mariner's Golden Age leading lady, Betty Dean, turned up looking young and healthy in INVADERS #4. In 1975, though, she was the grey-haired widow Mrs. Prentiss and suffered a sad fate. Marvel launched a new series, SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP, which paired the Sub-Mariner with Doctor Doom. The Latverian monarch promised to cure Namor's Atlantean people, who had fallen into a comatose state, in exchange for becoming his ally. This uneasy partnership soon found themselves pitted against an alliance of three of Namor's foes, Attuma, Tiger Shark, and the criminal scientist Dr. Lemuel Dorcas. In the melee of battle in the second issue, Dorcas killed Betty Dean Prentiss. Namor went into a fury, finally crushing Dorcas beneath an immense boulder. Surely a character with her long history and importance to the series deserved a better death scene than the rather abrupt and off-handed one she got. But this is one Marvel death that was not reversed: Betty Dean, the Sub-Mariner's first love, was gone. I suppose that for Golden Age comics fans, the death of Betty Dean would have been as shocking as the death of Gwen Stacy had been for Silver Age readers.

—Peter Sanderson

MARVEL HEROES

ON SALE DECEMBER 3

DAREDEVIL NO. 372
JOE KELLY/ARIEL OLIVETTI
THERE'S A TRIO OF KILLERS ON THE LOOSE IN NEW YORK CITY, AND THEY'VE GOT THEIR EYES SET ON NONE OTHER THAN DAREDEVIL'S ONE-AND-ONLY, KAREN PAGE! 1.99

FANTASTIC FOUR NO. 2
VARIANT COVER BY JOE MADUREIRA
SCOTT LOBDELL/ALAN DAVIS/MARK FARMER
IT'S MOVING DAY AS REED INTRODUCES THE FANTASTIC FOUR TO THEIR NEW HEADQUARTERS IN THE "EXOTIC" LOCALE OF NEW YORK CITY'S PIER 4. .... 1.99

KA-ZAR NO. 10
MARK WAID/ANDY KUBERT/JESSE DELPERDANG
"URBAN JUNGLE" PART 3 OF 4
THE PENULTIMATE CHAPTER OF KA-ZAR'S FIRST MAJOR STORY ARC! 1.99

MOON KNIGHT NO. 2 (OF 4)
DOUG MOENCH/TOMMY LEE EDWARDS/ROBERT CAMPANELLA
MOON KNIGHT BEGINS TRACKING DOWN THE OMINOUS PORTENTS IN HIS NIGHTMARE, HOPING TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF HIS OWN RESURRECTION–AND COMES INTO DEADLY CONTACT WITH STAINED GLASS SCARLET! 2.50

ON SALE DECEMBER 10

ALPHA FLIGHT NO. 7
STEVEN T. SEAGLE/SCOTT CLARK/CHRIS CARLSON
ALL THE EVILS INSIDE DEPARTMENT H EXPLODE, THREATENING TO CONSUME ALPHA FLIGHT! 1.99

CONAN: THE USURPER NO. 3 (OF 3)
CHUCK DIXON/STEVE LIEBER/KLAUS JANSON
CONCLUDING THE BRONZE BARBARIAN'S ALL-NEW THREE-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES! 2.50

GHOST RIDER NO. 93
IVAN VELEZ JR./JAVIER SALTERES/MARK TEXIERA
"LAST TEMPTATION" PART 4 OF 4 .... 2.99

IRON MAN NO. 1
WRAPAROUND COVER BY SEAN CHEN & ERIC J. CANNON
KURT BUSIEK/SEAN CHEN/ERIC J. CANNON
MEGA-SUAVE MULTI-MILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST TONY STARK IS BACK IN THE CORPORATE SADDLE, WHILE IRON MAN IS BACK IN HIS CUTTING EDGE ARMOR! 2.99

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY NO. 517
STARRING THE BLACK WIDOW
SCOTT LOBDELL/RANDY GREEN/RICK KETCHUM
A NEW CREATIVE TEAM SWINGS THE SOLO SPOTLIGHT ON THE BLACK WIDOW! 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 17

AVENGERS NO. 1
WRAPAROUND COVER BY GEORGE PÉREZ
KURT BUSIEK/GEORGE PÉREZ/AL VEY
WHEN, ONE-BY-ONE, AROUND THE GLOBE, FORMER MEMBERS OF THE AVENGERS ARE BESEIGED BY ASGARDIAN MENACES, THE TEAM FOUNDERS MUST REUNITE TO DEAL WITH THE THREAT! 2.99

CAPTAIN AMERICA NO. 2
VARIANT COVER BY RON GARNEY & BOB WIACEK
MARK WAID/RON GARNEY/BOB WIACEK
CONTINUING THE NEW ADVENTURES OF THE SHIELD-SLINGING LIVING LEGEND! CAPTAIN AMERICA'S JOURNEY HOME FINDS HIM ON A NAVY SUB THAT'S IN BAAAAAD SHAPE! 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 17

CONSPIRACY
PAINTED COVER BY IGOR KORDEY
DAN ABNETT/IGOR KORDEY
MARK EWING IS A DAILY BUGLE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER WHO HAS STUMBLED UPON A STORY THAT JUST MAY CHANGE THE WAY YOU LOOK AT THE MARVEL UNIVERSE FOREVER. 6.99

CROSSOVER CLASSICS: THE MARVEL/DC COLLECTION
TRADE PAPERBACK
VARIOUS
AVAILABLE AGAIN! COLLECTED IN ONE HISTORIC VOLUME: **SUPERMAN VS. THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, SUPERMAN AND SPIDER-MAN, BATMAN VS. THE INCREDIBLE HULK,** AND **THE UNCANNY X-MEN AND THE NEW TEEN TITANS!** 22.95

HEROES FOR HIRE NO. 8
JOHN OSTRANDER/PASCUAL FERRY/JAIME MENDOZA
AT LAST, IRON FIST'S TRUE AGENDA IN FORMING HEROES FOR HIRE, INC. IS REVEALED! 1.99

INCREDIBLE HULK NO. 461
PETER DAVID/DAVID BREWER/ANDREW PEPOY
BRUCE BANNER COMES FACE-TO-FACE WITH THUNDERBOLT ROSS! 1.99

THE SILVER SURFER
TRADE PAPERBACK
STAN LEE/JACK KIRBY
REPRINTING THE CLASSIC COLLABORATION BY STAN LEE AND JACK KIRBY! 15.99

THUNDERBOLTS NO. 11
KURT BUSIEK/MARK BAGLEY/VINCE RUSSELL
CITIZEN V'S SECRET PLAN MOVES INTO FULL SWING! BUT WHICH T-BOLTS WILL STAND WITH HIM—AND WHICH WILL TURN AGAINST HIM? 1.99

UNLIMITED ACCESS NO. 3 (OF 4)
COVER BY PAT OLLIFFE & GEORGE PÉREZ
KARL KESEL/PAT OLLIFFE/AL WILLIAMSON
THIS IS THE BIG ONE: AT THE COMMAND OF DARKSEID, IT'S THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS VS. THE ORIGINAL JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA! 1.99

ELEKTRA NO. 15
LARRY HAMA/MIKE DEODATO JR./SCOTT KOBLISH
ELEKTRA HEADS FOR TOKYO IN SEARCH OF WOLVERINE'S FRIEND YUKIO—AND INSTEAD RUNS INTO THE ARMS OF THE SILVER SAMURAI! 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 24

MARVEL VISION NO. 27
IT'S 64-PAGES OF ALL-MARVEL FUN! DID YOU EVER WONDER WHY RADIATION KILLS IN THE REAL WORLD BUT GIVES YOU GROOVY POWERS IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE? DID YOU EVER WONDER WHERE THE MAN-THING CAME FROM? DID YOU EVER WONDER HOW YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS GOT THEIR BIG BREAKS? WONDER NO MORE, TRUE BELIEVER! YOU'LL GET THE ANSWERS FOR ALL THESE QUESTIONS, PLUS THE BEAST FILES, TIME SLIP, MARVEL CHRONICLES AND MUCH, MUCH MORE! 1.99

SHADOWS & LIGHT NO. 1
PAINTED COVER BY BRIAN STELFREEZE
RON MARZ, GERRY JONES & LEN WEIN/BERNIE WRIGHTSON,
GENE HA, BRIAN STELFREEZE & STEVE DITKO
ALL NEW LOOKS AT THE HULK, DAREDEVIL, BLACK WIDOW AND IRON MAN IN STARK BLACK AND WHITE! 2.99

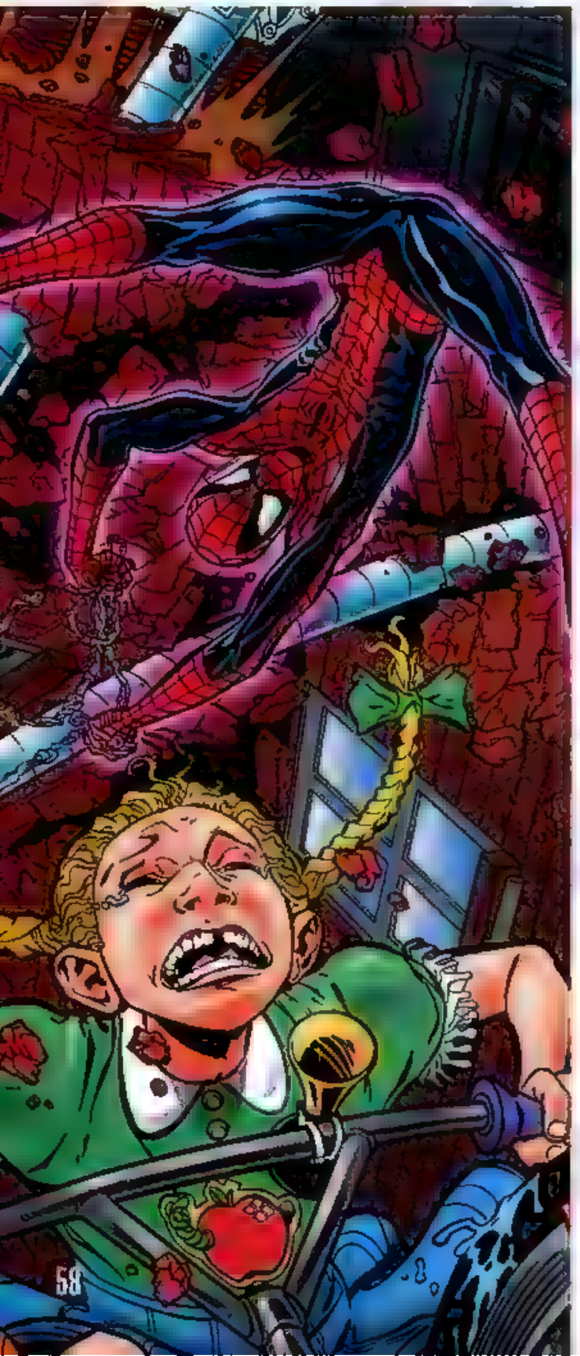
ON SALE DECEMBER 31

DEADPOOL NO. 13
JOE KELLY/SHANNON DENTON/NATHAN MASSENGILL
"DROWNING MAN" PART 2 OF 2
THIS IS IT: DEADPOOL VS. T-RAY–'NUFF SAID! 1.99

QUICKSILVER NO. 4
TOM PEYER/DEREC AUCOIN
SHE'S BACK FROM THE HEROES REBORN UNIVERSE–QUICKSILVER'S WIFE, CRYSTAL! BUT SHE MAY FIND THINGS ARE NOT QUITE THE SAME AS SHE REMEMBERS THEM–BETWEEN HER AND HER HUSBAND, AND BETWEEN HER HUSBAND AND THE REST OF THE SUPER HERO COMMUNITY. WILL PIETRO HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A PEACEFUL LIFE WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER AND HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY'S KNIGHTS, HIS NEW "FAMILY"? 1.99

SILVER SURFER NO.136
J.M. DEMATTEIS/TOM GRUMMETT/MATT RYAN
CONTINUING A JUMP-ON STORYLINE FEATURING GUEST-PENCILER, TOM GRUMMETT (ADVENTURE COMICS)! EVEN THOUGH THE SURFER'S DEAD, HIS SPIRIT IS TRAPPED IN A REALM WHERE ONE OF HIS OLDEST AND GREATEST ADVERSARIES NOW RESIDES! NOW THE TWO CLASH IN A WAY UNLIKE THEY EVER HAVE BEFORE! 1.99

SPIDER-MAN



ON SALE DECEMBER 3

MARVEL TEAM-UP NO. 6 STARRING SPIDER-MAN & NAMOR
TOM PEYER/JOSH HOOD
ON ONE SIDE THE WONDROUS WEB-SLINGER HAS THE REJUVENATED WRECKING CREW, COMPLETE WITH THEIR ASGARDIAN POWERS! ON THE OTHER, HE HAS A BOTHERED AND BEWILDERED SAVAGE SUB-MARINER, MAKING HIS RETURN APPEARANCE FROM THE "HEROES REBORN" UNIVERSE! THE QUESTION IS, WILL THE AMNESIAC ATLANTEAN BE SPIDEY'S FRIEND OR FOE? 1.99

THE SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN NO. 24
TODD DEZAGO/MIKE WIERINGO/RICHARD CASE
PETER AND MARY JANE FINALLY GO ON A WELL-DESERVED VACATION IN THE CARIBBEAN–AND PETE PROMISES TO LEAVE SPIDER-MAN AT HOME! BUT HOW CAN HE KEEP HIS VOW WHEN HE LEARNS THE PASSENGER LIST INCLUDES ASSASSINS, S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS, AND THE MADCAP MENACE OF THE LOOTER?! 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 10

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN NO. 431
TOM DEFALCO/STEVE SKROCE/BUD LAROSA
PART 2 OF "CARNAGE COSMIC"! DIAGNOSED WITH STOMACH CANCER, CLETUS KASADY DECIDES IT'S NO MORE MR. NICE GUY! CARNAGE–NOW WITH THE STOLEN POWER OF THE SILVER SURFER–DECIDES TO DESTROY THE ENTIRE WORLD! ...1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 10

MARVEL ADVENTURES NO. 11
STARRING SPIDER-MAN

RALPH MACCHIO/ANDY KUHN/HARRY CANDELARIO

THE SINISTER **SANDMAN** IS TRYING OUT FOR A SPOT IN THE **FRIGHTFUL FOUR**, AND TO PROVE HIMSELF, HE'S ASSIGNED A MISSION THAT'S ALSO A LABOR OF LOVE: STOMP HIS OLD FOE SPIDER-MAN! IT'S A SANDSTORM OF FURIOUS ACTION IN THE EVER-POPULAR ANIMATED STYLE! 1.50

ON SALE DECEMBER 17

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN NO.88

HOWARD MACKIE/JOHN ROMITA JR./SCOTT HANNA

SPECIAL JUMP-ON, STATUS-QUO ROCKING ISSUE! A BODY TURNS UP IN THE SEEDY SECTION OF NEW YORK CITY—WITH ITS NOSE AND MOUTH FILLED WITH WEB FLUID! BRANDED A MURDERER, SPIDER-MAN IS ONCE AGAIN HUNTED BY THE POLICE! DID SPIDEY REALLY DO IT? COULD THIS BE MORE OF NORMAN OSBORN'S MACHINATIONS? OR IS IT SOMETHING MUCH WORSE?! 1.99

WHAT IF? NO.105
STARRING SPIDER-MAN

TOM DEFALCO/RON FRENZ

"WHAT IF PETER PARKER AND MARY JANE HAD RAISED THEIR DAUGHTER?" MUCH TO THE SHOCK OF FANDOM, LITTLE MAY PARKER "DISAPPEARED" IN PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN #75. BUT WHAT IF THINGS WENT DIFFERENTLY? 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 24

THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN NO.254

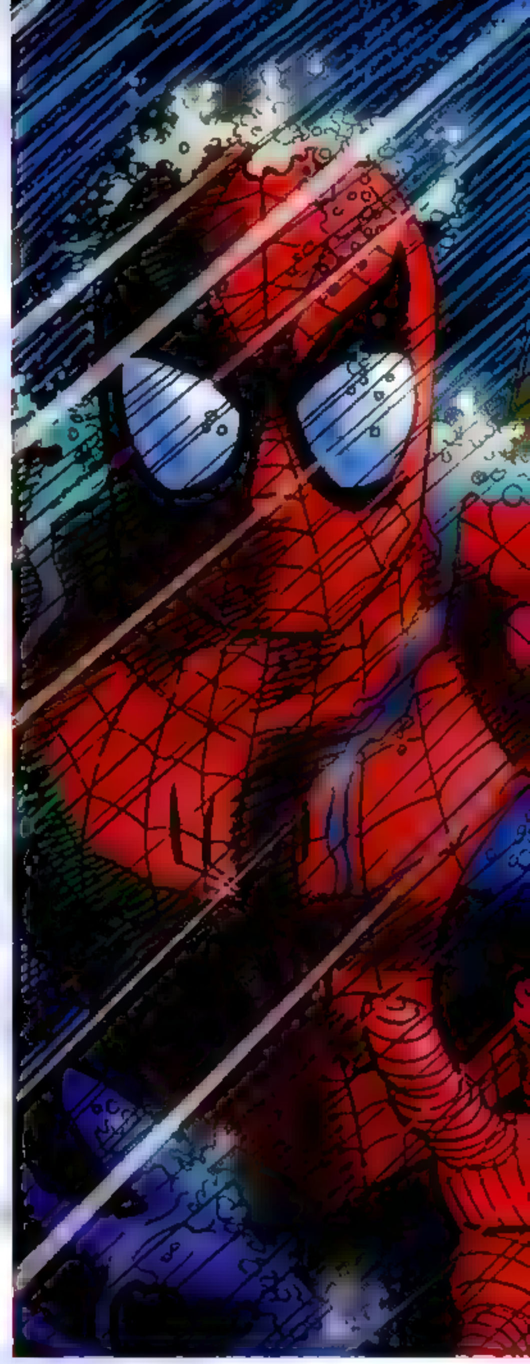
J.M. DEMATTEIS/LUKE ROSS/DAN GREEN

WHILE SPIDER-MAN ENDURES THE TORTURES OF THE SADISTIC **PROFESSOR ANGST**, BEN URICH—THE MAN WHO BLEW THE WHISTLE ON THE GREEN GOBLIN'S TRUE IDENTITY—COMES FACE-TO-FACE WITH **NORMAN OSBORN!** 1.99

SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED NO.19

MARK BERNARDO/JOE BENNETT/JOE PIMENTEL

A HARROWING JOURNEY INTO THE TWISTED MIND OF THE LETHAL LIZARD! SOMETHING WEIRD IS GOING DOWN IN MIAMI, AND WITH CRIME IN THE STREETS SKYROCKETING AND CORRUPTION IN HIGH PLACES OUT OF CONTROL, ALL SIGNS POINT TO DR. CONNER'S REPTILIAN ALTER EGO! 2.99



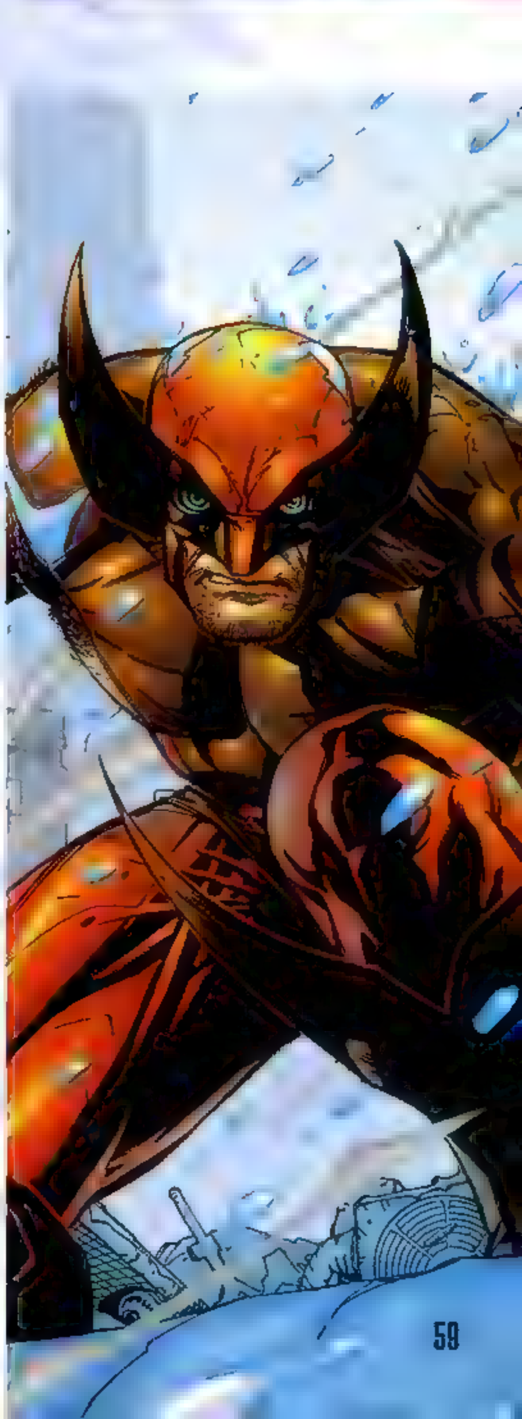
X-MEN

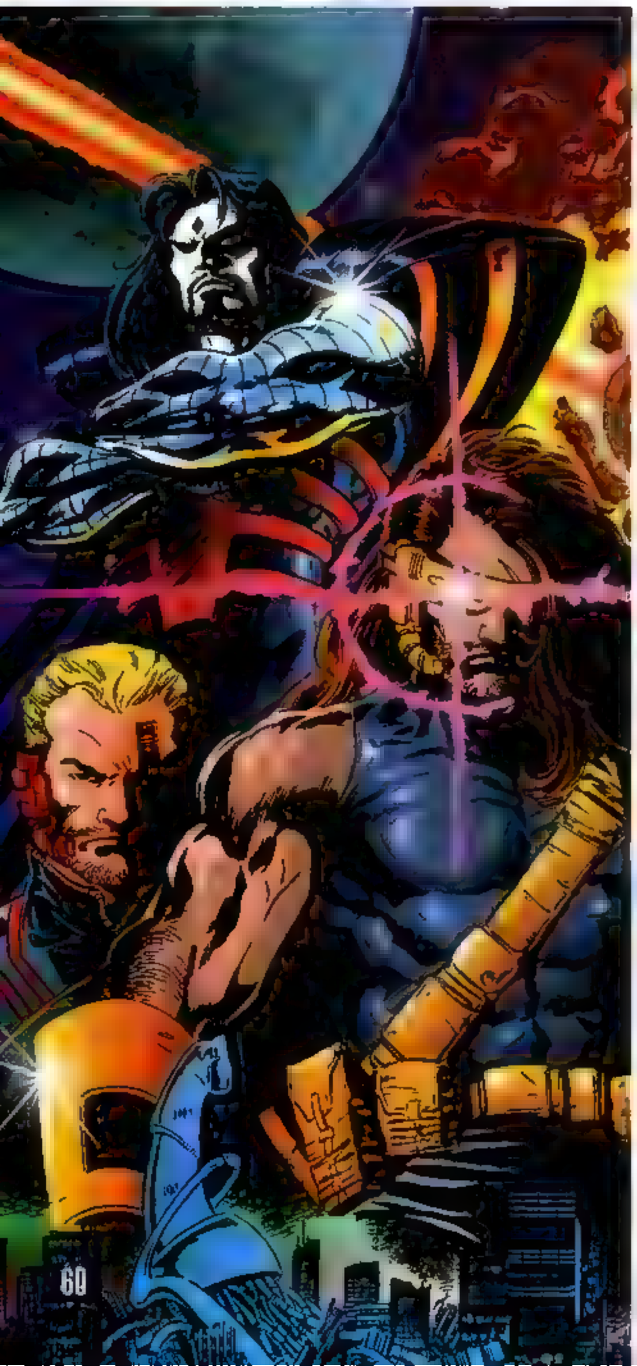
ON SALE DECEMBER 3

CABLE NO. 51

JAMES ROBINSON/LADRONN/JUAN VLASCO

THE HELLFIRE HUNT CONTINUES AS CABLE PURSUES DONALD PIERCE TO THE ENTRANCE OF APOCALYPSE'S STRONGHOLD! BUT WHEN THE ASKANI'SON IS OVERWHELMED BY PIERCE'S FORCES, HE MUST RELY ON THE AID OF A ONE-TIME VILLAIN—A MAN WHO WILL FORCE CABLE TO MAKE A PROFOUND MORAL DECISION! 2.99





ON SALE DECEMBER 3

GENERATION X/GEN 13

COVERS BY SALVADOR LARROCA & CHRIS BACHALO
JAMES ROBINSON/SALVADOR LARROCA
A SUN-SOAKED MEXICAN RESORT–SOUNDS LIKE PERFECT PLACE FOR SOME R & R, RIGHT? THAT'S WHAT THE KIDS OF **GENERATION X** AND **GEN 13** THINK–UNTIL THEY STUMBLE UPON AN BLACK MARKET ORGAN TRANSPLANT RING! ...3.99

MAVERICK NO. 6

JORGE GONZALEZ/JIMMY CHEUNG/ANDREW PEPOY
MAVERICK–CAUGHT IN A DEADLY GAME OF CAT-AND-MOUSE WITH SABRETOOTH! 1.99

UNCANNY X-MEN NO. 352

STEVE SEAGLE/ED BENES/TIM TOWNSEND
CONTINUING THE EVOLUTION OF THE X-MEN! THEY ARE THE "FIRST COUPLE OF THE X-MEN," NOW FORCED TO FLEE THE TEAM THEY LOVE. 1.99

X-MAN '97

CHRIS GOLDEN/RAMON BERNADO
NATE GREY ENCOUNTERS THREE FACES FROM THE "AGE OF APOCALYPSE" IN THIS 48-PAGE ANNUAL! 2.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 10

GENERATION X NO. 35

LARRY HAMA/JASON JOHNSON
IN ORDER TO STOP EMPLATE, JUBILEE MUST TRAVEL THROUGH A BIZARRE DIMENSION! 1.99

TALES OF THE AGE OFAPOCALYPSE

SCOTT LOBDELL & RALPH MACCHIO/JOE BENNETT
AVAILABLE AGAIN! REPRINTING THE 48-PAGE ONE-SHOT THAT RETURNS TO ONE OF THE BEST-SELLING STORY-LINES OF ALL TIME! 5.99

TALES OF THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE: SINISTER BLOODLINE

JOHN FRANCIS MOORE/STEVE EPTING
YEARS BEFORE FANDOM ENTERED THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE, AN ALIEN CRAFT LANDED IN NEW YORK CITY AND CHANGED THE LIFE OF **CYCLOPS** AND **HAVOK**, THE SUMMERS BROTHERS, FOREVER! 5.99

WOLVERINE: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST NO. 3 (OF 3)

JOHN FRANCIS MOORE/JOE BENNETT/JON HOLDREDGE
THE PREQUEL TO "DAYS OF FUTURE PAST" CONCLUDES! WITH THE COUNCIL OF THE CHOSEN'S APOCALYPTIC PLAN TO CREATE PLANET-WIDE CATACLYSMS ABOUT TO COME TO FRUITION, AND **HELMUT ZEMO**, THE POWER-MONGERING LEADER OF THE SENTINEL'S HUMAN HIGH COUNCIL, HUNTING HIM, WOLVERINE MUST JOIN FORCES WITH THE MAN WHO IRREVOCABLY WRECKED HIS LIFE! 2.50

X-FACTOR NO. 142

HOWARD MACKIE/DUNCAN ROULEAU/ART THIBERT
SABERTOOTH CLOSES IN AS WE LEARN THE SECRET BETWEEN VAL COOPER AND WILD CHILD! 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 17

EXCALIBUR NO. 117
BEN RAAB/MELVIN RUBI
BEGINNING A NEW FOCUS FOR EXCALIBUR, AS KITTY PRYDE, COLOSSUS AND NIGHTCRAWLER (THE EX-MEMBERS OF THE X-MEN) JUMP INTO THE SPOTLIGHT! 1.99

X-MAN NO. 35
TERRY KAVANAGH/ROGER CRUZ/BUD LAROSA
NATE'S ANONYMITY IN NEW YORK CITY IS FINALLY COMPROMISED AS HE RESPONDS TO A TERRORIST THREAT THAT JEOPARDIZES THE LIVES OF INNOCENTS AND IS WITNESSED BY THE MEDIA. PLUS: THE REVELATION OF A BEHIND-THE-SCENES MANIPULATOR KNOWN AS KILLGRAVE! 1.99

X-MEN NO. 72
JOE KELLY/CARLOS PACHECO/ART THIBER
CHARLES XAVIER IS MISSING, CYCLOPS AND PHOENIX ARE GONE, AND PROFESSOR LOGAN'S SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS IS IN SESSION! IT'S BONE DAGGERS VS. BONE CLAWS AS **MARROW** AND **WOLVERINE** GO HEAD-TO-HEAD IN A SAVAGE FACE-OFF! 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 24

KITTY PRYDE: AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. NO. 3 (OF 3)
LARRY HAMA/JESUS REDONDO/SERGIO MELIA
CONCLUDING KITTY'S ALL-NEW LIMITED SERIES! IT'S THE FINAL SHOWDOWN WITH **OGUN** AS HE INSINUATES HIMELF INTO THE **S.H.I.E.L.D.** HELICARRIER COMPUTERS YET AGAIN! 2.50

LONGSHOT
J.M. DEMATTEIS/MICHAEL ZULLI/AL WILLIAMSON
FINALLY, HE'S OFF MOJOWORLD AND ON EARTH! AND SOMETHING TELLS HIM THAT HE'S NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE–WELL, ACTUALLY, HE IS! 3.99

WOLVERINE NO. 121
WARREN ELLIS/LEINIL FRANCIS YU/EDGAR TADEO
"NOT DEAD YET" PART 3 OF 4
CHAPTER THREE OF GUEST WRITER WARREN ELLIS' FOUR-PART THRILLER! THE ENEMY HE'D THOUGHT LONG-DEAD, THE ONE-TIME ASSASSIN KNOWN AS **"THE WHITE GHOST"** HAS RETURNED–AND SYSTEMATICALLY MADE HELL OF LOGAN'S LIFE! 1.99

X-FORCE NO. 74
JOHN FRANCIS MOORE/ANDY SMITH/MARK MORALES
AS THE X-FORCE GANG MAKE THEIR WAY ACROSS THE COUNTRY, THEY MAKE A PIT STOP DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS, WHERE THEY FIND AN OLD FRIEND: **SKIDS!** 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 31

BISHOP: XAVIER'S SECURITY ENFORCER NO. 2 (OF 3)
JOHN OSTRANDER/STEVE EPTING
ACCUSED OF MURDER, BISHOP IS HUNTED BY THE FORCE HE ONCE LED–THE X.S.E.! MEANWHILE, **ROOK**, THE EVIL TELEPATH THAT FRAMED BISHOP, FANS THE FLAMES OF THE HUMAN/MUTANT WAR! BUT WHICH SIDE WILL THE INFAMOUS **HELLFIRE CLUB** SIDE WITH? 2.50

WILDC.A.T.S/X-MEN: THE DARK AGE NO. 1
COVER BY MATT BROOME
VARIANT COVER BY MICHAEL GOLDEN
WARREN ELLIS/MAT BROOME/SEAN PARSONS
THIS IS IT, THE FINAL HOUR OF THE FINAL DAY OF THE FINAL YEAR! IT'S THE END OF HUMANITY, AS WELL AS SUPER-HUMANITY, UNLESS THE COMBINED FORCES OF THE X-MEN (INCLUDING **WOLVERINE**, **STORM**, **KITTY PRYDE**, **CABLE** AND **PHOENIX**) AND THE WILDC.A.T.S (INCLUDING **WARBLADE**, **VOODOO**, **EMP**, **GRIFTER** AND **ZEALOT**) CAN SOMEHOW MANAGE TO STOP THE **DAEMONITES** AND THE **SENTINELS**–AND THE HELLISH HYBRIDS THEY'VE UNLEASHED ON A RAVAGED WORLD! 4.50

MARVEL PRESENTS

ON SALE DECEMBER 3

STAR TREK®: VOYAGER™ NO. 14

LAURIE SUTTON/TERRY PALLOT/AL MILGROM

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST PART 1 OF 2

ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THE ALPHA QUADRANT, THE U.S.S. VOYAGER PROVIDES WHAT THEY THINK WILL BE ROUTINE AID TO A DISABLED SHIP. ON AN URGENT MISSION, THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN MUST DELIVER HIS DECEASED CONSORT TO A SPATIAL ANOMALY TO COMPLETE A GENERATIONS OLD RITUAL. 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 10

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE® NO. 15

ANDY MANGELS & MIKE MARTIN/GREG SCOTT/ART NICHOLS

DS9'S RESIDENT TAILOR WOULD LIKE TO FORGET THE DEEDS HE COMMITTED AS A MEMBER OF THE OBSIDIAN ORDER. HOWEVER, DESPITE HIS BEST INTENTIONS, A HORRIBLE EVENT COMES BACK TO HAUNT HIM! 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 17

STAR TREK®: STARFLEET ACADEMY™ NO. 15

CHRIS COOPER/CHRIS RENAUD/ANDY LANNING

"T'PRIELL REVEALED" PART 2 OF 3

THE CADETS MAKE A SHOCKING DISCOVERY: THEIR TEAMMATE T'PRIELL HAS ACTUALLY BEEN DEAD FOR YEARS, AND THE T'PRIELL THEY KNOW IS REALLY SPYING ON THEM FOR THE TAL SHIAR! 1.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 24

DOCTOR WHO NO. 260

VARIOUS

THE OFFICIAL, FULL-COLOR PHOTO MAGAZINE FEATURING INTERVIEWS, ARTICLES AND COMICS CELEBRATING THE MANY LIVES OF THE LEGENDARY DOCTOR WHO! 5.99

ON SALE DECEMBER 31

STAR TREK®: EARLY VOYAGES™ NO. 13

DAN ABNETT & IAN EDGINTON/
PATRICK ZIRCHER/STEVE MONCUSE

DUE TO A NASTY EXPERIENCE LAST ISSUE WITH AN ALGOLIAN CRYSTAL, YEOMAN COLT FINDS HERSELF THROWN FORWARD IN TIME INTO AN ALTERNATE FUTURE! AND THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE HER IS NONE OTHER THAN THE CAPTAIN OF A JUNKY FREIGHTER, THE SHABBY BUT DASHING **JAMES T. KIRK!** IN ORDER TO RETURN TO HER OWN TIME, YEOMAN COLT WILL HAVE TO FIND THE ENTERPRISE- A SHIP STILL UNDER THE COMMAND OF **CAPTAIN PIKE** THAT CURRENTLY RESIDES IN KLINGON SPACE! 1.99

STAR TREK®: VOYAGER™ NO. 15

LAURIE SUTTON/TERRY PALLOT/AL MILGROM

"SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST" PART 2 OF 2

TUVOK IS TRAPPED, CAPTAIN JANEWAY IS ENRAPTURED, CHAKOTAY IS JILTED AND B'ELANNA IS ON THE PROWL! IN THE BALANCE: THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE U.S.S. VOYAGER!
. . . . .1.99

COOL MARVEL STUFF

CREATIVE LICENSE

PSYLOCKE SCULPTURE

CREATIVE LICENSE PRESENTS THEIR MOST DRAMATIC SCULPTURE TO DATE. A COMPANION PIECE TO THE BISHOP SCULPTURE, PSYLOCKE IS COMPLETELY SUSPENDED FROM THE BASE BY MENACING TENTACLES. POSED WITH HER PSYCHIC KNIFE, PSYLOCKE IS READY FOR THE FIGHT OF HER LIFE. 10" HIGH X 9"WIDE, THIS LIMITED EDITION SCULPTURE COMES WITH A CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY.

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE $175.00

GOOD STUFF

MARVEL SUPER HERO MOUSEPADS

YOUR DESKTOP WILL NEVER BE THE SAME WITH THESE MOUSEPADS FROM GOOD STUFF! NATURAL RUBBER BACKING PREVENTS THE ANTI-STATIC DELUXE SURFACE FROM SLIPPING. CHOOSE FROM THE SILVER SUFER, SPIDER-MAN, THE HULK AND WOLVERINE TO GIVE YOUR WORK SPACE AN EDGE!

SUGGESTED RETAIL $9.99 EACH

COMIC IMAGES

MARVEL SUPER HEROES T-SHIRTS

THIS NEW ASSORTMENT OF 100% COTTON TEES (L, XL & XXL) INCLUDE THE FANTASTIC FOUR, SPIDER-MAN, MARVEL MONSTERS AND CAPTAIN AMERICA IN REGULAR, JUMBO AND SUPER JUMBO PRINTS.

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
$14.99-$20.99

NEXT MONTH #25 SHIP SHAPE

SHIPPING DECEMBER 3, 1997

CABLE NO. 51	PG 59
DAREDEVIL NO. 372	PG 56
FANTASTIC FOUR NO. 2	PG 56
GENERATION X/GEN 13	PG 60
KA-ZAR NO. 10	PG 56
MAVERICK NO. 6	PG 60
MARVEL TEAM-UP NO. 6	PG 58
MOON KNIGHT NO. 2 (OF 4)	PG 56
SENSATIONAL SPIDEY NO. 24	PG 58
STAR TREK: VOYAGER NO. 14	PG 62
UNCANNY X-MEN NO. 352	PG 60

SHIPPING DECEMBER 10, 1997

ALPHA FLIGHT NO. 7	PG 56
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN NO. 431	PG 58
CONAN: USURPER NO. 3 (OF 3)	PG 56
GENERATION X NO. 35	PG 60
GHOST RIDER NO. 93	PG 56
IRON MAN NO. 1	PG 56
JOURNEY MYSTERY NO. 517	PG 56
MARVEL ADVENTURES NO. 11	PG 59
STAR TREK: DS9 NO. 15	PG 62
TALES OF THE AGE OF APOC.	PG 60
WOLVERINE: DOFP NO. 3 (OF 3)	PG 60
X-FACTOR NO. 142	PG 60

SHIPPING DECEMBER 17, 1997

AVENGERS NO. 1	PG 56
CAPTAIN AMERICA NO. 2	PG 56
CONSPIRACY	PG 57
EXCALIBUR NO. 117	PG 61
HEROES FOR HIRE NO. 8	PG 57
INCREDIBLE HULK NO. 461	PG 57
PETER PARKER, SPIDEY NO. 88	PG 59
SILVER SURFER TPB	PG 57
STAR TREK: STARFLEET NO. 15	PG 62
THUNDERBOLTS NO. 11	PG 57
UNLIMITED ACCESS NO. 3 (OF 4)	PG 57
WHAT IF? NO. 105	PG 59
X-MAN NO. 35	PG 61
X-MEN NO. 72	PG 61

SHIPPING DECEMBER 24, 1997

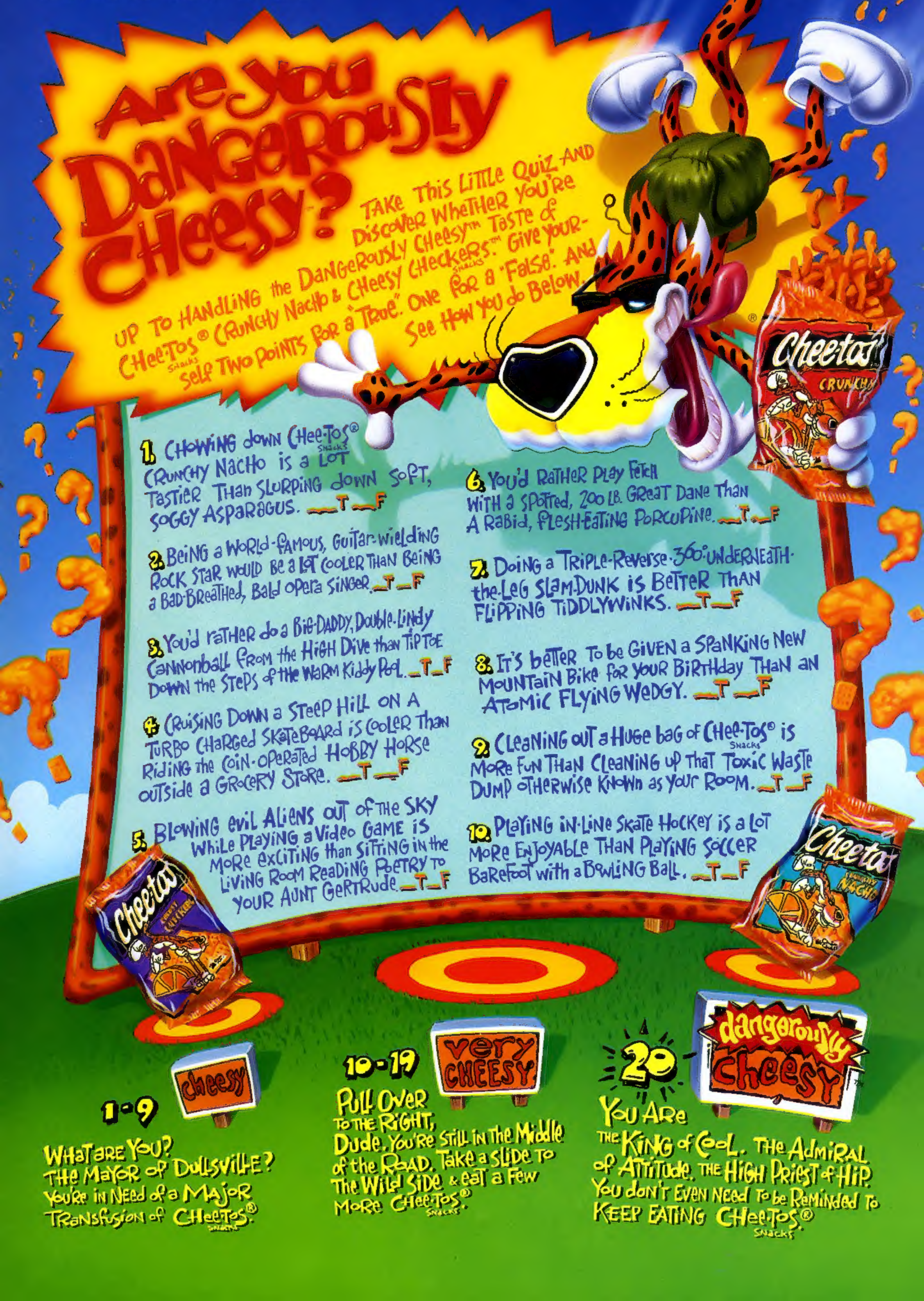
DOCTOR WHO NO. 260	PG 62
ELEKTRA NO. 15	PG 57
KITTY PRYDE NO. 3 (OF 3)	PG 61
LONGSHOT	PG 61
MARVEL VISION NO. 27	PG 57
SHADOWS & LIGHT NO. 1	PG 57
SPECTACULAR SPIDEY NO. 254	PG 59
SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED NO. 19	PG 59
WOLVERINE NO. 121	PG 61
X-FORCE NO. 74	PG 61

SHIPPING DECEMBER 31, 1997

BISHOP: X.S.E. NO. 2 (OF 3)	PG 61
DEADPOOL NO. 13	PG 58
QUICKSILVER NO. 4	PG 58
SILVER SURFER NO. 136	PG 58
STAR TREK: EARLY NO. 13	PG 62
STAR TREK: VOYAGER NO. 15	PG 62
WILDC.A.T.S/X-MEN: DARK AGE	PG 61

- SPECIAL 80-PAGE ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
- ALPHA FLIGHT'S WRITER STEVE SEAGLE TAKES ON MORE MUTANTS WITH THE UNCANNY X-MEN
- MORE HEROES RETURN
- CONAN COMES TO TELEVISION
- THE "BOB SQUAD," EDITOR BOBBIE CHASE AND HEAD HONCHO BOB HARRAS CHEW THE FAT
- HOW CREATORS BROKE INTO THE BIZ
- STAR TREK: UNTOLD VOYAGES
- KITTY PRYDE: AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.
- TIMESLIP, BEAST FILES, MARVEL CHRONICLES AND MORE!

CHEE•TOS, CHEESY CHECKERS, CHESTER CHEETAH and character, and DANGEROUSLY CHEESY are trademarks used by Frito-Lay, Inc., © 1997 Recot, Inc.



SEE NICK IN 3D!
September 22-28. Every night at 8/7c.
NICKELODEON
3D
NOGGLEVISION
Hey Arnold!™ – Mondays and Wednesdays at 8/7c
The Secret World of Alex Mack™ – Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8/7c
KABLAM!™ – Fridays at 8/7c
Rugrats™ – Saturdays at 8/7c
The Mystery Files of Shelby Woo™ – Sundays at 8/7c
Don't miss out– get your free NoggleGoggles today
in specially marked boxes of OSCAR MAYER® LUNCHABLES® Fun Packs and Post® GOLDEN CRISP®, WAFFLE CRISP®, and HONEYCOMB® cereals. Plus look for great Nickelodeon offers in packages of TOMBSTONE® Pizza, Handi-Snacks® Cheese & Crackers, Handi-Snacks® Pudding, and OSCAR MAYER® Bologna. Then—every night at 8/7c during the week of September 22–28—put on your NoggleGoggles to catch new Nick episodes in 3D!
©1997 Viacom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon and all related titles, logos and characters are registered trademarks of Viacom International Inc.
TOMBSTONE
Handi-Snacks
Honey-comb
Golden Crisp
KRAFT
Kids
BRANDS